ALLAN FORTH COMMUNE

THE TRIUMPH OF SOCIALISM

FINDLAY WATT

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BY

FINDLAY WATT

"I have seen violence and strife in the city, day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: Iniquity also and mischief are in the midst of it. Wickedness is in the midst thereof: oppression and guile depart not from her streets."

—PSALM lv, 9-11

"If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and the violent taking away of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter, for one higher than the high regardeth; and there be higher than they. Moreover, the profit of the earth is for all; the king himself is served by the fields."

—ECCLESIASTES v, 8-9

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

"Socialism is impracticable! And even if shown to be practicable and desirable, there is no sane method by which the transition from the present Individualistic to the future Socialistic state can be effected!"

Thus speaks the very respectable, prosperous, church-going citizen whose utmost range of political vision contemplates the possible exchange of a Liberal Government for a Conservative, and *vice versâ*.

But is our very respectable citizen quite certain that the existing system *is practicable?* For, after all, a "*practicable*" social system must be one which in *practice* operates beneficially to all society. A few years hence people will look back to the social conditions existing at this day with wonderment bordering on contempt.

"What?" they will say, "40 millions of cultivable and habitable acres in these islands, and yet the great mass of the 46 millions of population content to be herded in barrack-like houses in congested areas called cities! An annual income equivalent to an average of £200 per household, yet millionaires are not only permitted, but set in high places, while, as a natural corollary,

millions grovel in hunger and wretchedness, dirt and disease!"

They said it would not *pay* the employer, it would not *pay* the landlord, it would not *pay* the merchant, to give wages and supply the wants of the millions on terms which would prevent hunger and wretchedness, dirt and disease! They spent millions a year on prisons, asylums, and poorhouses, Old Age Pensions, National Insurance, and Education, *but no cure was or could be effected!* Had the nation not learned in the year 1913 that it *pays* to keep the whole population healthy, prosperous, and contented?

Their social system was absurd, *utterly impracticable!*"

But, dear reader, these things shall not always be. For many years Labour, and all it stands for, has been timidly tapping at the door of Christendom: even now the knocking has become quite loud: the sick patient within babbles about these terrible words, "Socialism," "Confiscation," "Taxation," and appeals to the Doctor if these euphonious words, "Liberalism," "Conservatism," "Rent," "Profit," "Dividend," are not ever so much pleasanter.

But the knocking without continues: it is now clamorous. If these pages persuade you of the wisdom of opening the door before it is battered down, the Author will be satisfied that he has not laboured in vain.

F.W.

Aberdeen, 1913.

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ALLANFORTH COMMUNE.

CHAPTER I.

Christmas Eve in Edinburgh.

It was Christmas Eve of the year 1911. I had turned my back upon the cares and anxieties of the swiftly closing year, looking forward, as we all do, to a better and brighter time in the coming year (though that happy anticipation had no firmer foundation than the "hope which springs eternal in the human breast"), and in the peaceful enjoyment of a good going pipe, was sauntering eastward along Princes Street, when my attention was arrested by a large crowd at the corner of Charlotte Street, from the midst of which a voice, in no raucous, but rather pleasantly powerful tones, proclaimed, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." This open-air meeting I speedily recognised as one of the efforts made by the members of Charlotte Chapel for the reclamation of those who had lost their way on Princes Street, and the voice that of their vigorous and devoted pastor, Josiah Kerr.

After spending but a few minutes on the fringe of the crowd I continued on my way eastward, while the words of that text kept jingling in my

mind, and looking into this face and that as I went along, I found myself repeating under my breath, "Cast out—Cast out—Out-cast."

Nearing Castle Street I beheld the large form of a noble policeman whose movements invited attention. His eagle eye was upon something up the street, and suddenly he strode forward a few paces, but when I arrived at the corner, he was returning with his accustomed leisurely and dignified tread.

With not unnatural curiosity I glanced up the street to ascertain the cause of the constable's unwonted activity, for though Princes Street had even more than its customary stream of humanity, there were not half-a-dozen people in Castle Street at that time, making it easy to see what was amiss.

A well-dressed man, rather over middle-age, somewhat the worse for drink, but not incapable, wending his foggy way south, and two female figures making a hasty retreat into the shady haunts of Rose Street. That was all.

Quite a common-place event. Yes, I had seen such things often; and yet something impelled me on this Christmas Eve to go and interview these women. Perhaps the text had something to do with it. Acting on this impulse, I at once turned into Castle Street (without thinking that if any acquaintance had observed me he would probably say, "There's Watson looking for trouble") and had not gone far when I was saluted by a voice which seemed neither masculine nor feminine,

simply horribly coarse. "Where are you going in such a hurry?" came from the owner of the voice, a woman by dress, ostentatiously youthful, yet whose countenance betrayed evidences of many ill-spent years, a life of depravity, while her breath was laden with the fumes of alcohol. Her companion, on the other hand, was distinctly young, a girl of not more than twenty, with dark features of a somewhat Jewish type, which might have been called beautiful in a society woman; good figure, set off to advantage in a dress of dark material. I evaded a cordial invitation from the elder lady to accompany her "home," and slipping a half-crown into her hand had no difficulty in inducing her to depart, which she promptly did, generously undertaking to drink my health. Turning to the young girl beside me, I asked her to walk with me a few minutes, and she, readily acquiescing, I had in a very short time learned her whole sad story.

Her name was Julia Macdonald, she was the oldest of a family of eight, her mother, who died about a year previously, was of Jewish extraction, while her father was Scottish, much given to drink.

His occupation was that of slipper-making, which was carried on in their dwelling house of two apartments, and in which he was assisted by all the children who could do anything at all.

During Mrs. Macdonald's lifetime the lot of the children was a hard enough one, yet her self-sacrificing efforts, ultimately fatal to herself, had

enabled her husband to provide their daily bread; but on her death the father went more and more to the drink, leaving his children utterly uncared for. Julia had done her best, but what could that amount to?

Pressed to explain how she came to be in such company as that in which I found her, she displayed considerable reluctance, yet I was satisfied of her honesty. She was in the habit of carrying the slippers to the warehouseman who bought them, and in this way made the acquaintance of a highly-placed employee, who flattered her and, under pretence of making love, betrayed her. This had only been a few months ago, and as winter set in her own needs, as well as those of her younger sisters and brothers, made her an easy prey to the neighbour woman, under whose tuition she was learning a new way of making money.

"And do you really like the life?" I inquired. She made no verbal reply: her look of ineffable disgust made eloquent answer.

"Wouldn't you like to give it up?" I went on. She turned to me with a look of eager expectancy, then her face fell, and in hopeless tones she asked, "What am I to do?" I was staggered. Considering the girl's training and surroundings what *could* she do? Feeling sore at heart for the poor girl, I pondered for a moment on what I, a bachelor of thirty years of age living in lodgings, could do to put her on the straight road.

Of course, I might have fired off a few comforting texts of Scripture, promised to go home and pray for her, and recommend her to do the same for herself: but somehow that did not strike me as sufficient. Fortunately, just then a happy inspiration struck me, and my way for the present became clear.

I remembered my landlady telling me that my fellow-lodger seemed to be well-to-do, and interested himself in slum work. I determined to take counsel of him. Pressing a half-sovereign into the hand of the young girl standing beside me, I said, "That will tide you over for a day or two, and if you let me have your address I will communicate with you shortly."

"Oh no, sir," she replied with quivering voice, "I can't take that, you are very kind, but——"

"Now, Julia," I interrupted, "this is Christmas Eve, and you must allow me the pleasure of making you this little Christmas gift. I will be delighted to think it will enable you to go through Christmas Day at least with some degree of happiness and hopefulness."

Her dark eyes were tear-dimmed, yet there shone from them a light of gratitude as she cast upon me a look such as Mary Magdalene must have given her Lord.

"Yes, sir," she said, "I will accept your gift because you are so good. And I will never go on the street again."

"That's right, I know you have the will, the way will be opened up to you." So saying, I

put out my hand to bid her good-night; she took it in both of hers, and kissed it fervently.

"No, my poor girl," I remonstrated, "you must not do that. In spite of the peculiar circumstances in which we have met, I regard you in the same way as the greatest ladies in the land, and I would not expect them to kiss my hand. I've had a mother, and I've had a sister, they are both gone from this earth, but I revere their memory, and they would be disappointed in me if I treated you otherwise than as a sister. Now, take this car, and get home; good-night."

"Good-night, sir, and may you have a very happy Christmas."

"Thank you, my dear girl, good-night."

So interested had I been in Julia's sad life story, that I had scarcely noticed how far our walk had taken us. We had sauntered right through Stockbridge, and well out towards Craigleith, before retracing our steps to the car terminus, where we parted. The night air was keen and bracing, the moon shone placidly and clear, and being in reflective mood I preferred walking to travelling by car, so taking my way back to town by the Queensferry Road and Dean Bridge, I arrived at my lodgings at Castlehill shortly after eleven o'clock.

Ah, how good it was to throw off my heavy coat, step into a well-lighted room, and plunge into an easy chair before a blazing fire. I sat but a short time, however, when I again became possessed by the feeling of loneliness which I had

sought to escape by my evening ramble. This was my first Christmas Eve spent in lodgings, and those who have had a similar experience, no matter how comfortable the lodging, how thoughtful and motherly the landlady, will readily understand the intense feeling of utter loneliness which oppressed me. Hitherto I had spent the festive season at my home in the country; now I had none.

The last prop of the old home had gone eight months before, when my mother was laid to rest.

Starting to my feet, I paced the room several times until I noticed that the blind had not been pulled down. Turning down the gas, the better to see out, I looked northward over the Gardens to Princes Street.

How striking was the contrast. Princes Street, brilliantly illuminated by the electric light, its endless stream of humanity flowing ever onward, hastening here, sluggishly moving there, while on the Gardens below the moon shone down with a serene radiance, throwing shadows of trembling tree and shivering shrub on the grass like grim spectres stalking through a graveyard. What wonder that in imagination I travelled back to that Perthshire village where three rivers meet, nestling among the hills in solemn silence, while the same moon lighted my way to the graveyard with its plain old whitewashed church in the centre. There peacefully slept father, mother, and sister, all who had made home-life sacred to me.

How satisfying was that home-life; it seemed but as yesterday that it was complete, now it is forever gone, and with a pang I ask myself, "wherein shall I again find satisfaction?" Still, I reflected, the very recollection of such a home-life is surely no small gift, and I must render thanks to the Giver. In the midst of my reverie my eyes wandered to the crowded street, the feeling of loneliness passed and gave place to that of restlessness.

Whither go you, my brother: where does this end, my sister? Is this what you call seeing life? Is it not rather the way of death?

Will you not allow yourselves to remember that the fruits of all this folly are remorse and bitterness? How long, O Lord, how long shall vice and avarice flaunt itself, and poverty and wretchedness be tolerated in this fair land Thou hast so abundantly blessed?

I had, almost unconsciously, given utterance to my musings, and swiftly and unexpectedly came the reply, "Not long, my friend, not long, if only our fellow countrymen could be made alive to their highest interests."

Wheeling round in astonishment, by the dim light of the lowered gas I beheld framed in the doorway the handsome form and smiling face of my fellow-lodger, Allan Graham.

During the few months of my stay with Mrs. Smith I had seen but little of Graham, with whom I had only a nodding acquaintance.

To-night, however, my mood was such that

congenial company was just what I needed, so I cordially invited him to come in and have a bit of supper with me.

"Thanks, old man," he replied, "with pleasure, especially as you seem to have interests in common with myself. I feel sure we shall be of use to each other."

"I am not sure about being of use to each other," I made answer, "but I don't mind telling you candidly that I was contemplating making use of *you*."

He laughed. "I am certain I will be delighted; tell me your story."

Drawing our chairs to the table, we sat down to our cup of cocoa and cold tongue, not exactly what one would call a sumptuous repast, but withal a very convenient one both for landlady and lodgers, seeing that the latter kept distinctly irregular hours. Thus it happened that while Mrs. Smith and her daughter were enabled to enjoy well-earned repose, our creature comforts were adequately attended to; and, notwithstanding the simplicity of the fare, the spotless tablecloth, the dainty china, and our ravenous appetites made the meal as enjoyable to us as would be an elaborate spread to any epicure.

So well matched was the fare to our appetites that for some minutes we supped in silence, and just as I was about to begin my narration of the events of the evening, there broke upon the stillness of the night the chiming of the bells of St. Giles Cathedral, while in solemn tones the

Tron Church clock tolled the midnight hour. Springing to his feet, Graham reached across the table, and, grasping my hand, wished me a very happy Christmas, which kindly wish I cordially reciprocated.

Thus was ushered in the nineteen hundred and eleventh anniversary of that morning when first arose that Star of Hope which has shone steadily ever since, spite of being often concealed behind the clouds of evil in its numerous guises, and which shall only be dissolved in the effulgent light of perfect day.

Supper finished. "Let's light up and sit by the fire," said Graham, "while we have this story of yours. I really think on an occasion like this we might indulge in the luxury of a cigar; what do you think?"

Again we found ourselves in cordial agreement. He passed his cigar case, we lit up, and under these ideal conditions I proceeded to recount the facts already known to the reader. Only once did he interrupt, and that was when I referred to the woman in whose company I found Julia as "an old hag."

"Ah, don't say that, please," he said, while a look of pain flitted across his face, "she was once an innocent, wee babe, she was once a sweet little girl, and for what she is now, God only knows who and what is to blame."

The gentle reproof was not lost upon me, though I had used the unhappy expression more by carelessness than by design.

Concluding my narrative, "Now," I exclaimed, "what is to be done to set this poor girl on the straight road? I feel utterly impotent, having neither money nor influence to be of material assistance."

"It's all right, Watson," replied Graham, "you have done what you could, and that is all that can be required of you. If you will let me have Julia's address, you may rest assured that she will be given the help she needs. And you can take this as a little Christmas gift; the satisfaction that you have probably been able to pluck a brand from the burning. I know that will be a great joy to you. Now, as I see you are interested in the social problem, has it ever occurred to you that it has many aspects, not the least important being the relationship of the sexes?"

"No," I replied, "I have not considered the sex problem in its relation to the social problem, though I have certainly been interested for years in the latter, for no man who is not blinded by selfishness can fail to be dissatisfied with existing social conditions. At the same time, I am bound to confess that all my study of the subject has led me practically nowhere.

"For about ten years I thought social salvation could be effected by the agency of the Church, but I have come to the conclusion that the Church as it exists only reflects society as *it* exists, and therefore has no uplifting tendency."

"You were not far wrong," said Graham, "in

supposing that the work of the Church should have for one of its results at least the improvement of the social conditions of the mass; it certainly *ought* to effect this, but with equal certainty it does not.

"Please don't accuse me of bumptiousness when I claim to have studied the social question to some purpose, and to have arrived at definite conclusions. You have your business affairs to attend to, while I have been a lazy beggar, never earned a penny in my life, and with a natural bent for getting at the bottom of things, I have had every facility for getting there, both by book study and by personal intercourse with all sorts and conditions of people, from peers in palaces to people in poorhouses."

I had been inclined to smile at his claim to have found the panacea for social suffering and wrong, for he was certainly not older than I, but his concluding words and his look of conviction caused me to regard him with the greatest interest. "Well," I interjected, "you are the very man I am looking for. Let me have this secret you're in possession of, and I'll undertake to do my share in making it known."

"There's no secret about it," he replied, "this truth is not gold at the bottom of a mine, but the finest nugget in the world kicked about on the surface. Has it never struck you that all social evils are the result of false ideals, and that if the true ideal (that is to say, the absolutely correct principle of social life) be discovered and acted

upon, these evils must necessarily and spontaneously disappear?

"We look for this principle in Acts of Parliament, we look for it in education, we look for it in the Church, and we find it in none of these.

"But in the life and teaching of Jesus we do find it; That ye love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbour as thyself.

"Nothing new, you are about to say. Of course not, but to *Believe* it would be something new, to *Practice* it, something newer still!

"Now, let us take these words of Jesus as a rule to measure conduct with, and the results will be most extraordinary.

"Measure the relation of Capital and Labour by it; measure the relation of buyer and seller by it; measure the commercial system, Parliament, The Church; and are not all these condemned by it?

"As plain matter of fact there is no sphere, not even the Church, in which an honest attempt is made to put into practice 'love thy neighbour' as the true principle of social life.

"Yet is it not self-evident that it is the only truly workable principle, the only principle by which tyranny and sweating can be abolished, the only principle under which the great mass of mankind may enter into the full joy of living? Imagine a community of, say, a hundred people inhabiting an island. The operation of the principle of every man for himself and devil take the hindmost inevitably promotes discord and

strife, and affords the opportunity for the aggrandisement of the strong and the unscrupulous at the expense of the weak, thus creating the very social evils which are so apparent in our national life. On the other hand, the principle of 'Love thy neighbour' just as inevitably tends to promote concord and peace, each unit of the hundred has ninety-nine friends, concerned for his welfare, instead of his being pitted against these ninety-nine in an incessant struggle for self-advancement or bare existence even.

"Were it the case that this struggle brought out the best qualities of a man, something might be said for the system, but the very reverse is the case. Under the present system of individualism, it is considered perfectly moral for a man, when he has got up in the world a bit, to exploit the labour of his fellow-men for his personal profit, regardless of *their* profit; in other words, he trafficks in the lives of his fellows."

"Is it not the case, however," I inquired, "that the existing social fabric is based upon the law of supply and demand, and that to put your principle into practice is impossible, inasmuch as it is a breach of that law?"

"What *is* the law of supply and demand?" he replied, "when was it discovered, or, rather, when was it invented. Is it a law like that of the Medes and Persians? No, the phrase 'law of supply and demand' is a mere shibboleth, created as an apology for greed, extortion, and the appropriation of the fruits of the labour of others. The

defence of the individualistic system by the ' law of supply and demand ' argument is sheer fraud, for this so-called law is most commonly disregarded by the very people who invoke its omnipotence. The Creator of this universe provides an abundant supply for every legitimate demand of His creatures; but the supplies are ' cornered ' by the money-makers, while the demand of the moneyless is ignored. It is, therefore, evident that the existing social fabric is *not* based upon the law of supply and demand, but upon the power of money.

" Money covers a multitude of sins, money can demand the supplies, money puts its possessor into position in Church and State, money is the standard, its acquisition the ignoble incentive to human endeavour, and whether honourably acquired or otherwise, the power lies in the money itself.

" Men sell honour for money, women sell body and soul for money, in its pursuit the lives of men and women are consumed. Such is the sordid and unstable foundation of modern society; the edifice reared upon it is neither symmetrical nor beautiful; it wants taking down."

" This taking down of the edifice," I said, " is Socialism. Would it not be made stable by the proper adjustment of the rights of capital and labour? "

" That is just what the politicians are trying to do," said Graham, " with what success you may judge by the present social unrest; but I will be

surprised if you do not find on mature consideration that the proper adjustment of the rights of capital and labour involves taking down the edifice. Under the individualistic system, capital wields tyrannical power, defrauding labour of its rights, and it is impossible that the interests of capital and labour can ever be made identical."

"All capital has been created by man's labour on God's earth and under the earth, with the aid of God's rain and sunshine; yet the avaricious few succeed in reaping the fruits of the labours of the many, doling out to the workers just as much as will maintain them as an efficient wealth-producing machine. When you described the taking down of the edifice as Socialism, I think you meant me to infer that you regarded Socialism as simply destructive. Now, I am not concerned to defend Socialism, or any other 'ism'; but if you will have it that the practice of the 'love thy neighbour' principle is Socialism, then I must claim for it that it is more than destructive. By its very nature, indeed, it must necessarily be destructive of many of the presently existing evils, while by that same nature it is constructive in that it raises up and establishes a higher and nobler standard of social life."

"I am not quite sure that I agree with all that," said I, "so much depends upon your ability to prove what you call the 'love thy neighbour' principle to be capable of practical application. I would also remind you that though you speak of the acquisition of wealth as

an ignoble incentive to human endeavour, it is one of the commonest arguments against Socialism, that under the system the absence of this very incentive will do much to retard natural progress and to curb inventive genius."

"You do well, Watson," replied Graham, "to raise these two objections, because if these difficulties be successfully overcome, the case for Socialism is practically established. Before answering your objections, however, I must enter my protest against your statement that the 'love thy neighbour' principle is impossible of application; and for this reason, that I decline to believe that the Master, when inculcating the principle, used idle words. True, under existing conditions it is difficult of application, but if the 'love thy neighbour' principle be a sound one, then the fault must lie with the individualistic system. What, may I ask, made you interest yourself in Julia Macdonald?"

"Nothing but the ordinary instincts of humanity," I replied shortly.

"Quite so," said Graham, "that's all that's wanted; a system under which the ordinary instincts of humanity may be freely exercised. But how many men, placed as you were, would have exercised the ordinary instincts of *in*humanity, or sheer brutality?"

"I want to thrash out this subject with you," he went on, "but it's two o'clock, and we must get off to bed. You might, however, keep this in view during our discussion, that it is not claimed

that the establishment of Socialism will heal every disease of the social body; there can be no finality or perfection in anything human; but at its worst I do claim that it will be infinitely better than the present individualistic system, the polished surface of which barely conceals the hideous mass of wretchedness beneath."

"You have nothing on to-morrow, have you? That's good," he continued, rising to his feet and yawning heartily, "we'll spend the day together. Come into breakfast with me at half-past nine. Good-night, old man."

I bade him good-night and went to bed, but spite of its delicious comfort, the working of my brain repelled sleep. For over an hour I lay wide awake, thinking out the problem of how I was to hold my own for the future in the whirlpool of modern commercial life. All around me during the past year I had seen one here and another there throw up their hands and be sucked down into the vortex. How long could I continue the struggle, what chance had I of ever reaching haven?

In order that the reader may understand my position, let me here tell what is necessary about my own affairs. For about a dozen years I had been a commercial traveller in the boot trade, an occupation thoroughly congenial to me, and for which I seemed to be well adapted. Beginning with a small enough salary, I had risen steadily until now I had £200 a year; but the conditions of commercial life had changed rapidly

and radically, and I could no longer blink the fact that my position had become exceedingly precarious.

Since I went "on the road" the number of travellers in my own line had almost if not quite doubled, and the outlet for my goods had been seriously curtailed in other ways; chiefly by the development of the co-operative movement, and the increase in the number of branch shops owned by large multiple firms, all of them practically shut doors to me; while the enormous increase in the variety of boots and shoes manufactured and in demand by the public, made it impossible for my customers to buy in such quantities as formerly.

During the past two years, notwithstanding the most strenuous toil and my utmost endeavour to adapt myself to the changing conditions, my turnover had steadily declined, the anxiety of it all had preyed upon my mind until I almost dreaded going to bed on account of insomnia, and now as I lay awake I again weighed up the situation, and again was baffled. But a gleam of hope entered the darkness of my mind: I remembered Tennyson's words:

> Our little systems have their day,
> They have their day and cease to be.

What if the existing social and commercial system be nearing an end? What if the times are ripe for the birth of a nobler, a purer, a saner system, such as that foreshadowed by Graham?

I found comfort in the thought, and wearied to exhaustion I hovered on the border of dream-land, when there seemed to steal gently into the room and bend over me one with whom I had been long familiar.

These were the same dark, gentle eyes, the eyes that spoke what the lips dare not give utterance; the same features of nose and mouth and beautiful teeth, surely the very person of that one whom I had idealised, but from whom I had been unhappily and eternally estranged, though I should never be able to banish her from my thoughts.

And what of her? Sleeping peacefully about a mile away across these streets and houses, has she any kindly thoughts of me? Very probably; but an abyss separates us, and on this earth it can never be bridged. But stay? That graceful form now with me is taller, the hair darker, black indeed, and sadness mingled with the sweetness of her gentle gaze. Ah, Julia, now I know you, and so you have come to speak peace to my troubled mind, to soothe the dull aching of my heart, to fill a void which even success in business would only mock.

Is it a new thing to know and feel that someone cared for you? Perhaps I am cared for too.

And so I slept.

CHAPTER II.

A Walk and a Talk.

It was broad daylight when I awoke with a depressing nervous headache, no rare experience with me lately. Realising that no advantage was to be gained by lying still, I sprang from bed, spent a few minutes at dumb-bell exercise, and had just dressed when Mrs. Smith tapped at the door, and in response to my invitation entered the room.

"A Merry Christmas to you, Mr. Watson," was her cheery greeting.

"And a very happy Christmas to you, Mrs. Smith," said I. "You must think me a lazy beggar to be just out of bed, and only thinking of breakfast at half-past nine o'clock?"

"Not at all, Mr. Watson," she smilingly replied, "you are a very busy man, and a long lie occasionally will do you good. I am to remind you that Mr. Graham expects you down to breakfast in a few minutes."

"I am ready to go now," I said, and accompanied her down to Graham's room. "Hullo, is he not down yet?" I asked.

" Oh, yes, and gone out over an hour ago," she replied, " away on some kindly errand, I feel sure. He is a dear, good fellow; always going about doing good. How many of us have to thank God for sending him into our lives? Poor Nellie, there," casting a glance at a photograph on the mantelpiece, " we owe it to Mr. Graham that her very life was spared to us. Ah, here he is," as a firm and sprightly step was heard on the stair, and Graham bustled into the room.

" Good morning, Watson," said he. " How are you this morning? Rather seedy, I suspect by your appearance. Oh, it's good to be out on a morning like this; what an appetite it gives one. Mrs. Smith, what's that savoury smell? Breakfast just at once, and we'll solve the mystery.

While he was getting his coat and gloves off, and Mrs. Smith bringing in the breakfast, I slipped out of the room, and returning in about three minutes, sat down to do justice to the ham and eggs, hot buttered toast, and tea. Looking up with my mouth full, I found Graham staring hard across the table at me.

" What's this, Watson," he said, " surely you are not using drugs? "

I am afraid I coloured slightly. " Not to any extent," I replied, " but how did you come to know? "

" Why," said he, " but a minute ago you were looking positively haggard, and already you seem quite fit; only drugs would produce that result. You must be careful, don't let it become a habit,

for then they lose their potency, and your last state is worse than your first. I think I know how it is with you, you are in danger of becoming another of the victims of our beautiful competitive commercial system, this delightful system which requires a man to spend every waking hour in the effort to earn a mere living, and throws him on the scrap-heap when he breaks down under the strain."

"There's truth in what you say, Graham," I made answer. "I am not disposed to complain about my lot in life, but the strain is a severe one, nor do I see any prospect of it relaxing."

"How can it under present conditions?" asked Graham, "rather must it tend to become more severe. But I am becoming familiar with cases such as yours, I find them everywhere. Just take the case of Mrs. Smith here for example. Her husband was what is stupidly called a self made man; in his youth he was industrious, economical, and persevering; shortly before he married he started a small wholesale business; for over a dozen years he struggled along, keeping his head above water, but never really succeeding, largely for want of sufficient capital, owing to his inability to realise some investments he had made with his earlier savings. He ultimately found it impossible to hold his own with larger competing firms, was made bankrupt, and, though his assets were greater than his liabilities, he was left penniless when his business was wound up. The incessant strain, the bitterness of disappoint-

ment, and the hopelessness of his outlook for the future were all too much for him, he became a physical and mental wreck, and little over two years ago he died in the asylum. During the last few years of Mr. Smith's life his wife had to turn her home into a boarding house in the endeavour to keep the wolf from the door. She and her young daughter did all the work themselves, but were often on the verge of starvation, and though it was necessary to keep up appearances, they both suffered in health from the actual want of sufficient wholesome food. Nellie especially, a young growing girl, was brought very low, and when I had the good fortune to come to this house as a boarder, just before Mr. Smith died, she had all the appearance of a consumptive. Needless to say, I made it my business to get her attended to; it made my heart bleed to be waited on by the patient winsome lassie, who was evidently dying on her feet. It took a year of the best medical skill, and wholesome feeding at a farmhouse high up on a hillside, to bring her round, and even yet she is rather fragile, but with great care I am persuaded her life will be spared."

"It was awfully good of you, Graham," I interjected, "it must have cost you a lot; how did you manage it?"

"I may as well tell you, Watson," he replied, "that I am not troubled about money matters; I have enough and to spare, but you can have no idea what a perfect delight it has been to me that my little efforts to be of service to these dear

ladies has been so successful. Why," he went on gleefully, " Mrs. Smith hadn't had a holiday for years, and during Nellie's absence in the country I got the other lodgers cleared out, and packed Mrs. Smith off to stay with Nellie nearly every week-end during that year, while I fended for myself here. Oh, it was the rarest fun; I generally had a college chum or two up, and we did have a time," and he laughed heartily at the recollection.

But in a moment he changed to the serious; with knitted brow and stern expression on his strong swarthy face he again addressed me. " Now, look here, Watson, what do you make of it all? Can society be established on a rational basis when such tragedy is possible? and not only possible but inevitable. Our social, commercial, and industrial system strikes me as suicidal and murderous. The State is much concerned about the decreasing birth-rate, but I venture to say that if the State would look after the quality of the population the quantity might be left to take care of itself.

" Under the individualistic system the average working class in cases of illness can only do as much as their limited means permit, and every year thousands of children and adults too are allowed to die for want of the highest medical skill and the ability to cease work until a cure has been effected.

" The Socialistic State, on the other hand, would make it its business to endeavour to restore

to health all the sick and injured whatever the cost might be. Again, who can estimate the loss of life every year for which our dividend-making, profit-hunting, capitalistic system is directly responsible? Men and women may be honest and willing workers yet be inadequately paid, and for want of money may be ill-fed because they cannot buy enough wholesome food at the price which has to give the landlord a profit, the farmer a profit, the miller a profit, and the baker a profit; may be ill-clad because they cannot buy good clothes at the price which has to give other three or four classes of merchants a profit; may be ill-housed because they cannot pay rent for a decent house at a rate which will be profitable to the feu-owner, the builder, the property agent, and the landlord. Even such people as these have the effrontery to marry and have children, and it is simply inevitable that the result of it all is decadence and premature death. Therefore I maintain that our individualistic capitalistic society is guilty of wholesale murder.

"The worker depends upon work and wages for a livelihood, work and wages depend upon the so-called law of supply and demand, which again is controlled or, at least, greatly affected by the fluctuations of the money market; in other words, the operations of the capitalists with the sole view to profit.

"Thus, the livelihood, the very lives of the workers and their dependents, is at the mercy of capital, the exact reverse of what should be,

seeing that all capital was created by labour."

"Don't you think, however," I inquired, "that the social legislation of the Liberal Government will do much to improve the conditions of life for the working class? Surely the millions of money the Government is spending on Old Age Pensions, National Insurance, and other remedial schemes must be an enormous benefit to the working class."

"On the surface," he replied, "it would appear so; but were that the case how is the present social and industrial unrest to be accounted for? I regard the interests of labour and the interests of capital as irreconcileable, and the efforts of the Government to reconcile these interests in the name of Liberalism are and must be futile. This very Government that professes to be able to *give* monetary help to certain classes of people is the same Free Trade Government that argues that if tariffs are imposed 'the consumer pays.' They do not take gold out of a mine and make gifts of it; they take it out of certain pockets and put it into certain other pockets. They may argue that they do well to take it from those who have and give it to those who have not, but I maintain that under the present system, in which capital seeks and insists upon profitable investment, if you take toll of capital, by a perfectly natural process capital protects itself by enhanced prices for commodities, and so 'the consumer pays' for Old Age Pensions and National Insurance, and every million spent

on these schemes is ultimately provided by the people whom they are supposed to benefit.

"The province of a Government, Liberal or Conservative, under the existing system, is to secure equity between man and man so far as the system permits, to protect the liberties of the people, and to attend to the interests of the country at home and abroad as economically as possible.

"Beyond that they cannot go, but were the State the sole landlord, the only capitalist, it would be in a position to protect every unit of its social organism, to govern on the 'love thy neighbour' principle."

I confess to a feeling of disappointment at this criticism of the Liberal Government's social legislation, for I had been inclined to regard it favourably. Therefore I inquired what advantage the Socialistic State could have over the Individualistic in its regard for the welfare of all its units.

"Just this," replied Graham, "that it pays the Socialistic State to *prevent* destitution, and, therefore, to prevent its units from becoming unfit, while under present conditions it is no concern of the individual capitalist that his profits are gained at the expense of the mass. The system which legalises the making of profit at such frightful cost as our city slums give evidence of is essentially a vicious one.

"Now, suppose we postpone further discussion for a little while we arrange the programme for

to-day. We are to have a little tea-party here at half-past four this afternoon, and until then we are free. What is it to be, billiards or a walk over the Pentland Hills?"

"Oh, a walk over the Pentlands by all means; it is just a day for it; the air is crisp enough and the ground dry enough to make walking a pleasure. Besides, I want to hear the rest of your argument for Socialism, and if you don't mind me saying so, I want to pick your brain to see if you can demonstrate Socialism to be a practicable, workable system."

"Agreed; well, let's get out. Hold on, though, until I see Mrs. Smith and get some sandwiches.

"Here, Watson," said he on his return, "stuff these into your pockets and I'll get this flask and wee bottle into mine."

On the way down The Mound we discussed the route of exit from the city, by train to Colinton, or by cable car to Craiglockhart, and walk through Colinton Dell. "It is a matter for grave consideration," said Graham, "but as a spice of adventure would add to the enjoyment of our outing I plump for the cable car. Oh, shareholder of Edinburgh Cable Car Company, thou that takest the profits, how often would I have taken thy cars, but they would not take me! How much concerned, too, you were for the amenity of your fair city, that you would not dream of electric standards and overhead electric wires, yet can tolerate the reeking, noisome dens

of your historic slums, and view unmoved the erection of that hideous mass, the North British Hotel, with its foundation in Hades and its upper structure defacing the eastern sky! And out of your contracts for cabling how many men made corrupt fortunes and not one of them is in gaol! Verily, British Public, thou are a long-suffering ass. But what would the citizens be without the rattle of the cable?

"The man living on the car route who goes early to bed wakes up at the unwonted stillness when the rattling of the cable ceases, and in a few hours again wakes up as the rattling begins for another day. No wonder city people suffer from nerve strain."

The arrival of the car for Craiglockhart put an end to his apostrophising of the cable system, and getting on board we duly reached the West End without a single break-down!

After resting a brief moment, the noble steed glided gracefully round the corner, mounted Lothian Road with many a jolt and many a jerk, and stopped to take breath at Tollcross. Re-invigorated, it plunged round the bend at an apparent rate of ninety miles an hour, starting so violently that the most seasoned passengers found it impossible to retain a dignified attitude, two stout gentlemen with a sedate old maid between them were huddled together in a heap on the seat opposite, while passengers on our side went sprawling in all directions.

When we had regained the usual dignified pose

of the Scottish passenger, and were exchanging awkward glances with each other, Graham remarked: "The man who could climb that outside stair while coming round there would find it child's play to cross Niagara on a tight-rope and turn a double somersault in the middle. I sometimes wonder how people squander threepences and sixpences on scenic railways, switchback railways, and figure-eight railways, when they can get over a mile of this for a penny." At the corner of Gilmore Place a decrepit old man with two sticks was assisted off by the conductor. "Good-day to ye, sir, and thank ye; it's a Goad's maircey we're a' spared," said the old chap as he hobbled away.

In due course we arrived at Craiglockhart, and set out on our tramp, having decided that we had just time to go through the Dell, up Bonaly Hill, round by the Glencorse and Bavelaw Reservoirs, down the hill to Balarno, and home by train at the appointed time for tea. There was a wondrous beauty in the Dell that day; this was my first visit in mid-winter, and the scene was entirely new to me. The Water of Leith was swollen with the melting snow from the hills, the dash and musical splash of its waters was the only sound that broke the stillness, save the crackling of frozen twigs under our feet, while far above the sun shone through the network of interlaced branches of the trees on either side, glistening on the frosted banks and on the rippling stream. As Graham strode on in front I called to

him: "How many of the Edinburgh people do you think have been here?"

"Not one half, I suppose," replied he, "and isn't it a pity they don't utilise their privileges?

"It would quite raise the tone of life in the city if its people would make a point of coming more into contact with nature by frequenting haunts such as this and by traversing the Pentlands. It uplifts the spirit, it is soul-satisfying, it brings health to those who are pent up in the city, and entails just as much exertion as is pleasant and beneficial.

"Though I am a Socialist, I am not a materialist altogether. Intercourse with nature helps us to rise from nature up to nature's God, and that surely makes life fuller, more interesting, better worth living. But the damnable allurements of city life destroy the appetite for the simple pleasures of the natural world."

"Speaking of Socialism," said I, "you were to give me some further enlightenment on the subject."

"Well," he replied, "there are many aspects of the subject, chiefly, perhaps, the ethical and economic."

"Exactly." I cut him short. "It is that last I want to hear about. I am quite satisfied that ethically Socialism is not merely defensible, but is infinitely higher in theory than our individualistic system. If Socialism can commend itself as strongly in its economic aspect I will become a Socialist forthwith. As a business man, I feel

that if it cannot be shown to be economically sound, the ideal, however excellent, can never be realised."

Graham was about to reply, but something in my remarks seemed to change the current of his thoughts, for he pulled himself up and loaded his pipe in silence.

"Yes, I incline to agree with you," he said at last very deliberately, "but make no mistake: even when Socialism is demonstrated to be economically sound it will still be opposed, as the ideal is the very opposite of that which prevails to-day, and mankind needs to be educated up to it.

"The ideal is not new, individuals here and there down the centuries have called attention to it; Socialism strives for its realisation by concerted action, but the ground has had to be prepared by the prophets of Socialism teaching men, as Pope says:

> To learn what happiness we justly call,
> Consists not in the good of one, but all.

"Fortunately, there are signs that this kindlier sentiment is at last to prevail. Now let us compare the economics of Socialism with those of the existing capitalistic individualism. The necessities of a civilised people are food and clothing, houses and furniture, education and recreation; under a Socialistic State these are provided at the cost of the raw material, plus cost of labour, plus cost of distribution. You will observe that

profit and interest on capital do not enter into the calculation, and that the interests of the State are best served, which is to say the people receive more of the produce, by keeping the cost of distribution down to a minimum.

"Under the present system, the cost of distribution, plus profit, plus interest on capital, well-nigh doubles the cost of produce to the consumer, while the reward of labour is only sufficient under the best conditions to keep the worker an efficient part of the profit-making machine, and so long as the power of capital rules the commercial and industrial system, even an all-round increase of wages is of no permanent benefit as their purchasing power is decreased by the necessarily increased price of commodities.

"Take your own trade, for example; would you mind telling me the average cost to the retailer of the boot he sells at 16s. 6d.?"

"From 11s. 9d. to 12s. 6d.," I replied.

"Now," he went on, "I understand that not infrequently the retailer buys from wholesale merchants who have *their* profit, they in turn buy from the manufacturers who have *their* profit, while they buy their raw material from leather merchants and tanners who have *their* profit, and expensive machinery from the engineers who also make a big profit. Obviously, the first cost of the raw material plus cost of production is only about 9s., and as a Socialistic community will easily undertake the distribution of its commodities at a cost of 10 per cent., I

think you will agree that Socialism scores the first point in the economic argument."

I was compelled to acknowledge that the argument seemed plausible enough, but I did not want to give it more than qualified assent, as I felt conscious of there being a kink somewhere. Ah, here it is, it struck me like an inspiration.

"By the way, Graham, what are you going to make of the displacement of labour? The manufacturer employs clerks and travellers, the middleman employs clerks, warehousemen, and travellers, the shopkeeper employs assistants, and all these will be thrown out of employment by the operation of your Socialistic economics."

Graham smiled. "You don't go far enough," he said, with a touch of irony in his voice; "you are surely forgetting the charwoman who cleans up the offices, the people who build the warehouses and shops, the bank employees who look after the money of these business people; the solicitors, advocates, and judges who settle their disputes and attend to their bankruptcy proceedings. If it be a good thing to find employment for the largest possible number of people in the mere distribution of goods, why not still further increase the number?"

"But——but——," I said rather hesitatingly, "you have not answered my question."

Graham laughed outright.

"My dear sir," said he, "excuse me for the moment being personal, you know I mean no offence. What do *you* labour at? What is the

product of your labours? Nothing: is not that so? Yes. Of course, you will say that you are engaged in the distributive department of commerce. But Socialism says that is absurdly overdone, that it would pay the State to take most of the banking people, legal people, and others engaged in the superfluous work of commerce, and give them productive work to do. As it is, all these non-producers who 'find employment,' as you put it, in the mere distribution of goods cause an enormous increase in the cost of commodities, so that the consumer has to do increased work to earn increased wages to pay the increased price. That is not only bad economics, it is madness."

"Well, granting all that," I replied, "it seems to me that if you take away nine-tenths of the present non-producers and put them to productive labour you will have enormous over-production."

"Over-production is practically impossible," said Graham emphatically; "while a greater or smaller number of the population are ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed, it is simply an outrage to speak of over-production. What is wanted is a more equal, more just, more humane distribution to promote the welfare and happiness of the whole community. Don't you see, Watson, that you would be of infinitely greater value to the State *making* boots than selling them? There would be something to show for the livelihood the State insures to you; and even though the boots you made might not be the most artistic, there

would be use for them as long as there are thousands of poor bairns needing to be shod. Again, over-production is impossible inasmuch as the superfluous products would be exported, their price becoming profit to the State, to be used for public purposes. Thus what you have called over-production simply means added wealth, increased comfort, greater happiness to all the people of the State. Of course, I grant that over-production is inimical to the interest of the capitalist; prices go down, and he does not have the same opportunity for making big dividends as when he is able to control the supplies, but this very fact is the most powerful condemnation of capitalistic individualism.

"I think I can demonstrate to you that capital in the hands of the individual is an unmitigated curse, as I think I have already shown that there can be no permanent amelioration of the condition of the worker so long as capital holds sway.

"Capital takes toll of the first-fruits of labour. Capital must have its dividend even though the workers do not receive a living wage, and if agitation results in better wages for the worker at the expense of dividend, then the capital is withdrawn to be invested elsewhere at a better return, and what do you make *then*, friend Watson, of the displacement of labour? The worker and his family may exist in a sort of way in slum properties, subject to attack from disease through the unwholesome and often unsanitary condition of the property, but that can only be

remedied after the landlord-capitalist has secured his dividend in the shape of rent. The miner may spend his short-lived days in a gaseous atmosphere below, he may live with his family in the but-and-ben house built by the Colliery Companies, houses wherein it is impossible to fulfil the ordinary requirements of decency, but there can be no betterment for him; the Colliery Company must have its dividends, *sometimes over 25 per cent. per annum.* And so on through the whole realm of productive industry capital takes precedence, while the welfare of the workers who create the capital is quite a secondary consideration.

"The more closely I study the relation of capital and labour, the more thoroughly am I convinced of the inherent antagonism of their respective interests."

"Still, Graham," I rejoined, "it is a commonly accepted fact that we cannot get on without capital."

"The very reverse of fact," replied he, "we *can* get on without capital, but we *cannot* get on without labour. Capital cannot make a single loaf of bread, capital cannot bring an ounce of coal from the mine, capital cannot make the fine clothes for our superfine gentry. Labour does all these things. Capital therefore is nothing in itself; but it is the legalised power which enables its possessor to force the man without capital to produce goods for the capitalist on the terms of the latter.

"Thus, though all capital was produced by labour capital is now the master, and labour the slave, and every coin minted, every bank-note engraved, every share certificate printed, strengthen the chain by which labour is fettered.

"We can't get on without capital! Why, let all capitalists take themselves and their capital out of this and every other democratic country in the world, and settle down in a select colony of their own.

"It will be interesting to see how they get on —*with* capital, but without the power to enslave labour. They will probably make dividends by lending their capital to each other, and sup, sleep, and have their being on dividends."

"And what about these poor devils of labourers in the countries bereft of their capitalistic benefactors?"

"Well, it is extremely probable that the capitalists would leave the land behind them, likewise the mines, and quite a number of other things, including such trifles as the sea and sky, so that the sun and rain might still shine upon and refresh the earth. In these circumstances I feel the aforesaid bereaved labourer does not deserve any sympathy; he seems likely to get on without it."

The severe logic, the daring imagination, and the quaint way in which Graham expressed himself, made me think seriously and laugh heartily at the same time, paradoxical as it may seem.

"This is no laughing matter," said Graham,

half in jest and half earnest; "the time is not far distant when these things shall be, and woe unto them who get in the way of the wheels of the chariot of progress. Now, honestly, Watson, what do you think of it all?"

"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Socialist," I replied.

"You are a Socialist, man," said he, "and don't know it, like thousands of others to whom the name is a stumbling block. But what about lunch? I feel a bit peckish."

"Singular coincidence, so do I; here's a dyke, we'll sit down and rest awhile." "Agreed," said Graham, suiting the action to the word, and, diving into his pockets, he brought forth his share of the lunch. I followed suit, and with appetites sharpened by our long tramp over the hills in a frost-laden atmosphere, we attacked the sandwiches in earnest but in absolute silence, for we each seemed instinctively disinclined to break the all-pervading stillness, a stillness which could be felt like a presence. The sandwiches disposed of, Graham produced his flask, poured out a little of the contents, and filled up the cup from the small bottle. "Try some of my cordial," said he, "and tell me how you like it. Isn't it good to round off an open-air lunch with?"

"It is excellent," I acknowledged, smacking my lips with satisfaction; "what is it?"

"That is Glenblankit pure malt whiskey with dry ginger in it, about the most satisfying drink I know of."

"But, Graham," said I, "I am a total abstainer, and never tasted whiskey in my life."

"Really," he replied, with show of surprise; "well, you have increased your knowledge and experience to-day, and are better qualified to speak of a thing you know something about. At the same time, to be in your profession you are on safe ground in being an abstainer."

"I feel quite sure of it," I said, with conviction," and am rather surprised at a man of your principles having anything to do with strong drink. Don't you think that on the drink question your example would be of infinitely greater value than all your precepts?"

"Certainly I do," he promptly agreed. "From my youth upward I have obeyed the command to be moderate in all things, even unto abstemiousness at times when I thought it prudent to deny myself a glass of beer or a drop of whiskey in the company of weaker brethren. Until about five years ago I never touched either, because I promised my father when I was a lad not to touch strong drink until I was twenty-five years of age. I kept my promise, and having set this example I quite agree with you that it is of infinitely greater value than all my precepts. But herein you and I differ. In common with nearly all Church people, your religion, I fear, consists in a whole list of negations and thou-shalt-nots. This strikes me as being entirely out of line with the whole spirit of New Testament teaching, which, if it teaches anything, teaches that Christians no

longer live in a realm subject to restrictive and punitive law, but in the full enjoyment of the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, having only this positive command to obey: "That we love the Lord our God, and our neighbours as ourselves," an injunction we ought to obey spontaneously and instinctively, as having in us the Spirit of Christ, which assuredly is the Spirit of Love."

While speaking, Graham passed me his cigar-case, and while lighting up I pondered his words for a full three minutes, words which seemed to ring true, yet conveying quite a different idea of religion from that I had been reared in, and which I had tacitly accepted.

"Yes, Graham," I said at last, after a few puffs at my cigar, "I do like your religion; I warm to it as something kindly, and just such as I feel Jesus meant it to be. Seeing you are such a convinced Socialist, tell me what would be the attitude of the Socialistic State to the drink traffic, and how the problems associated with strong drink would be dealt with."

"The problems you refer to," said he, "are serious enough, indeed; but there is no difficulty whatever in applying Socialism to the solution of them.

"In the first place, you are already aware that the production and distribution of intoxicants will be in the hands of the State, thus eliminating private interest from the traffic and securing the supply of the most wholesome goods, if the term

may be applied to strong drink. The men engaged by the State for this department of the public service would be men of character, thoroughly qualified for the work, whose qualifications would be not their ability to create drunkards, but their ability to conduct the business in an orderly manner and to the advantage of the community. This cannot fail to tend greatly to the sobriety and consequent welfare of the nation; but even these benefits are small compared with those which will naturally and inevitably ensue upon the adoption by the nation of a saner social system, a loftier ideal of social life. I am not an extremist on this drink question, but it would be absurd to deny its seriousness, for strong drink is not inaptly likened to a conflagration, destroying innumerable victims, causing untold misery. Plucking brands from the burning is right enough so far as it goes, but why not put out the fire? Or, if that cannot be done, why not prevent people falling into it? It would save an enormous amount of misdirected effort by misguided temperance fanatics if they would begin by seeking the answer to the question, 'Why do people drink to excess?' Of course, there is in every generation a large proportion of drunkards by hereditary tendency, who have neither the moral fibre nor the will power to resist the inordinate craving of their debased appetites, especially when these are reinforced by unwholesome environment; but as these are only the result of a cause, we must go further back, and

still ask, 'Why do people drink to excess?' Though in such cases as I have mentioned drinking is undoubtedly a disease, it is a huge mistake to imagine that this accounts for all excessive drinking. There are thousands who get drunk deliberately, because in that condition they forget their troubles, and feel an artificial happiness which is never theirs in reality. To the lonely young man in a bleak lodging, with a small salary, and tastes for better things undeveloped, the public-house and the exhilarating effects of alcohol are seductive; as, also to the married man with a large family and a small wage, as also to the business man well-nigh overwhelmed with care and anxiety, as also to the outcast among men, and to the women who have lost character and womanhood.

"But all these classes of people are the natural product of our barbarous industrial and commercial system; destroy the system, and replace it with one in which 'love thy neighbour' is the governing principle, and the fulness and joy of living possible to the mass of people will be the best antidote to excessive drinking."

"Yes, Graham," said I, "I thoroughly believe the tendency will be in that direction, but are you not over sanguine? Will there not still be drunkards, and what will you do with them?"

"Very practical questions to raise," was his comment. "The sins of the fathers," he continued, "are visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generations. Yes, there will still

be drunkards, but in rapidly diminishing numbers in proportion as the causes of and opportunities for drunkenness are removed. But a Socialistic State would have no hesitation in dealing drastically not only with drunkenness, but with other social disorders which are a menace to the State and to the proper natural development of the human race.

" Prisons, asylums, and poorhouses, as we know them now, would no longer exist, but drunkards and moral degenerates would, undoubtedly, be segregated, though in homes and surroundings where sensible efforts for their reformation would have some chance of success, for Socialism believes in reformative rather than in punitive methods.

" Further, as Socialism looks facts in the face and is not troubled with prudery, it would deal seriously with the problem of reproduction. In plain English, it would take all the steps necessary to prevent reproduction of the unfit, such as the victims of mental and hideous physical diseases. After all, the reproduction of the unfit is nothing short of a crime, a crime the more monstrous that it is perpetrated upon innocent babes, born into the world not only under the curse of original sin, to use a theological phrase, but under the condensed essence of it."

" Well, Graham, you are tolerably thoroughgoing, at any rate," said I.

" Logical, should you not rather say?" said he.

" Perhaps I should," I agreed.

"Now," said Graham, glancing at his watch, "we had better hop down to Balerno if we are to catch that 3.45 train back to town."

We hopped.

CHAPTER III.

A Christmas Party: I Discover a Man.

Arriving in the city just as darkness was descending, accompanied by a cold, grey mist which had crept up from the Firth, we strode along Princes Street and up the Mound, entering our lodging just a few minutes before the time set for tea. "After you have had a wash-up, come down to my room," said Graham. I obeyed with alacrity, for an aching void not exactly in the heart, and the slackness of my waistcoat, indicated my ability to do full justice to a hearty meal.

"Jee—hosh—aphat!" I was thunderstruck on stepping into his room to find a complete transformation since morning. The gas was not lighted, but fairy lamps on the table, on the mantel-piece, and on corner-brackets, together with the warm glow from the blazing fire lit up the room, revealing quite a forest of holly and mistletoe, a table loaded with real Christmas cheer, and tastefully decorated with the loveliest flowers, while the china and silver were exquisite. The table I was careful to note was laid for nine, and from the number of knives and forks I judged it was to be particularly high tea.

This met with my approval.

I had just completed my investigations when Graham entered and I murmured something genially sarcastic about his being a lovely sort of Socialist, to which he replied with unfailing readiness and in the same spirit reminding me of my words that his example was of infinitely greater value than all his precepts. "Now, shut up about Socialism for a while, and help me to entertain my friends, like a good fellow; here they are."

The words were no sooner out of his mouth when there was a gentle tap at the door, and he ushered in his guests. First came Mrs. Smith and Nellie, becomingly dressed for the occasion, then a worn-looking little man whom he introduced to me as Mr. Peter Simpson; followed immediately by two ladies, Mrs. Brown and Miss Beatrice Brown, the latter stunted in growth and slightly deformed, and having the appearance of one not properly balanced mentally, while the mother looked like a lady who had known better days, and still strove to live up to them. Then came the greatest surprise, not to say shock, of the evening. The last pair to enter were a tall and beautiful young lady, graceful of carriage, and more than comely to look upon, and a man whose dress and facial adornment, or rather want of it, showed him to be either a lawyer or a flunkey. But the young lady, was it possible? Had I not met her less than twenty-four hours ago? Observing my confusion, Graham cleverly and discreetly covered it. "Mr. Frederick

Watson," said he " I want to introduce you to a particular friend of mine, Miss Julia Macdonald. You have not met before, that is your mutual loss, but you must make up for it this evening."

While speaking, though his tones were gentle and kindly, he stared at me, as if defying me to contradict his assertion that we had never met before. Shaking hands with Miss Macdonald, I expressed my pleasure at making her acquaintance, and turned to be introduced to Mr. William Saunders, " another old friend of mine," said Graham.

If I was surprised and confused, it is easy to suppose that Julia should have been doubly so, but it was apparent that she was not unprepared for our meeting, as she seemed to have her feelings under perfect control, her wonderful eyes alone revealing the emotion which stirred her heart.

Mrs. Smith presided over the teacups at the top of the table, with Julia on her right, and Mrs. Brown on her left hand. Graham tackled the turkey single-handed at the other end, with Nellie on his right and Beatrice on his left hand, while I sat between Beatrice and Julia, with Mr. Simpson directly opposite. It was impossible not to admire the tact and skill with which Graham distributed and handled his guests, nothing could have been better than his placing of the motherless Julia under the direct care of the motherly landlady, and at the same time next to instead of facing me, while he made

himself responsible during the evening for the happiness of the unfortunate Beatrice. But what of his friend, Mr. Saunders? Here was another surprise. There was a corner reserved for him between Nellie and Graham, where he sat, occasionally conversing freely with both, but with marked respect to the latter, whom he invariably addressed as "Sir." Once when Graham asked him to kindly pass something from the sideboard, he replied, "Yes, my l——, yes sir." I noticed it, and looking at Graham, found him particularly intent on the dissection of the deceased turkey, with a slight smile on his countenance, which seemed also to express something like good-natured annoyance.

Ah, thought I, Saunders has been butler in some titled family. Still, there was nothing obsequious about his manner; he kept a sharp eye on the plates of the company, jumped up swiftly and noiselessly and served everyone with the greatest kindliness, resuming his seat quietly, and engaging in the conversation freely and intelligently. Altogether a remarkable phenomenon.

I must not pretend that the party was hilarious and full of buoyant and boisterous spirit; there was nothing in the circumstances of those present to lead one to expect an overflow of hilarity and conviviality, but neither was there the smallest degree of gloom or depression. Graham's geniality infected us all, his robust manliness, combined with graciousness of manner, lent a

charm to the whole circle. Nellie, for once in a way laid aside her natural reserve and was vivacity itself, while her mother beamed upon us all, giving confidence to the most timid, and making us feel at home in a sense that to most of us was a lost experience. Probably the fulness of our enjoyment consisted in the fact that it entered into lives dreary enough and joyless of themselves. Be that as it may, on looking round the company I could not help feeling that the happy expression on each face owed its origin as much to self-forgetfulness and the pleasure of each seeing others enjoy themselves, as to the generous fare provided by our host. He at least played his part to perfection; very skilfully he drew out everyone present without appearing to do so, even poor old Simpson, in his shrill, piping voice, taking part in the conversation, and joining in the laughter which some of Graham's stories provoked.

Perhaps it was the unexpectedness of it which made me enter into the entertainment with such zest; certain it is that I never enjoyed a social evening better before or since.

At the end of an hour it was agreed by common consent that we would not be fit for such another meal until next Christmas, and Graham suggested that we men should retire to my room for a smoke, leaving the ladies awhile to themselves.

Entering my apartment, whither I had been preceded by Mr. Saunders, who was turning up

the gas, I found the same transformation as in Graham's room. Holly and mistletoe hung all round, on the mantelpiece stood a handsomely framed text-card, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths," and on the table were a box of cigars, a box of cigarettes, a bottle of port, and some glasses. "Accept of these, my dear chap, with my best wishes," said Graham, smiling genially at my confusion," and when you are quite recovered you might stand us a smoke and a drink." "Well, Graham," I replied, "I certainly do accept them very gratefully; but what the deuce do you do these things for?" "For my own pleasure, and don't you interfere with it. This is Christmas, and I am determined to enjoy it thoroughly. Thanks," as I proffered the cigars, "come away, Mr. Simpson, and have a smoke." The old man helped himself diffidently, and as one accustomed to obey, but Saunders said he thought he would stick to his clay pipe, which he smoked with evident satisfaction.

Graham reached up and turned off the gas, Saunders stirred up the fire until the flames leapt in the chimney (he always seemed to have an intuitive understanding of Graham's intentions), and four very contented mortals sat for the most part in silence in the ruddy glow of the fire-light. "I say, Saunders, is this your handiwork?" said I, waving my hand towards the

decoration of the room. "Not entirely," he plied, rubbing his hands gleefully, "I had the able assistance of Mr. Simpson in that little job. And I needed it, for I have had a busy day." "Yes, Saunders," said Graham, "you have done well; but I knew you could do it. And now that you see the pleasure you have given us, I am sure you don't grudge the effort." "So far from that, sir," replied Saunders, "I feel the pleasure has been mine. Of course, you engaged me professionally, but nothing delights me more than to feel when I am paid for my work, that my efforts are successful and appreciated."

This, as I found afterwards, was characteristic of the man.

The history and the character of men may sometimes be read in their faces, and seated round the fire as we were I took advantage of the opportunity to make a deliberate study of the faces of my companions. That of Simpson was as plain to read as an open book. The sharp, pinched features, the meek eyes and weak mouth of this prematurely old man, spoke of a life of suffering endured with the patience of helplessness. To see him sitting there smoking his big cigar might have appeared comical had it not been so inexpressibly sad.

Turning my gaze upon Saunders, however, my reflections were of quite another kind. Those steady, unflinching black eyes, that aquiline nose and firm-set mouth spoke of tremendous power, equal determination, and tireless energy, and

though the prevalent expression was that of thoughtfulness, his alertness of manner made it impossible for anyone to make the mistake of supposing him to be lost in thought. Manifestly, his temperament had not the geniality possessed by Graham, to whom a smile was normal; he seemed to have his impulses and emotions under perfect control, yet was there no harshness apparent in his manner, which was ever marked by courtesy, modesty, and kindly consideration. Such a combination of qualities was surely lost upon one in his station of life, a man like that should be a cabinet minister at least. Was not this a case of a man striving to realise his destiny, a soul struggling to free itself from the binding fetters of its environment? Often had I argued that the glorious liberty which we freedom-loving Britishers enjoyed, allowed a man to do or be what he liked, or what he was capable of. Yet men with not a hundredth part of his qualities are held of more account than he if they have money and plenty of it, no matter if acquired by cheating on the Stock Exchange, or by the many other methods of cheating open to them. Socialism keeps men on a dead level, while the incentive of monetary reward brings out the best that is in men! Does it really?

Well, Graham, your Socialistic argument scores again.

My ruminations were abruptly terminated by Graham throwing the stump of his cigar into the fire and declaring that it was time we joined

the ladies. We found them seated around the fire chatting, but immediately we entered Mrs. Smith asked Graham to oblige them with some music. He promptly sat down at the piano and rattled off piece after piece from memory, and with little persuasion we got him to sing "The Village Blacksmith," "Nazareth," and one or wo sea-songs.

"Now," he said, wheeling round on the piano stool, "I'll have my revenge. Not one of you will escape until I have accompanied your song, and you, Mrs. Smith, will begin." I am quite sure that it was only by way of backing up Graham's efforts to entertain the company that Mrs. Smith did sing, for, as she said, it was years since she last sang before a party of friends. She must have been gratified with the effect of her example, for everyone present did make a more or less musical contribution.

No, gentle reader, I am not to give details of every vocal effort; wild horses will not drag from me what Mr. Simpson sang, and how he sang it. Besides I am not a musical critic.

But I did enjoy myself.

"Mr. Watson," whispered Nellie, leaning over towards me, "I want to tell you a secret. Have you noticed what swells mother and I are this evening?"

"No, Miss Nellie," I confessed, "to tell the truth I am a most unobservant duffer, but now that you mention it, I see that not only you and your mother, but the other ladies as well are all

very handsomely and tastefully dressed." "Oh, Mr. Watson," she replied, with a deprecating smile, "I was not seeking a compliment from you; I only wanted to tell you that all these things are gifts to us from Mr. Graham. Isn't it awfully good of him?"

I was profoundly moved by the man's thoughtfulness and generosity, and could find no words adequate to express my feelings, for I had so entered into the experiences of these poor women that I felt a kindness done to them as though it had been done to myself.

After a pause I said, rather solemnly I am afraid, "Yes, Miss Nellie, he *is* a good fellow; I don't know another like him."

It is not to be supposed that I ignored Jul . the whole evening; she was never out of my thoughts for one moment, but the peculiar position in which we found ourselves made conversation difficult, and I was not clever enough to make it easier, though ever so willing to do so. Notwithstanding this, the evening passed away agreeably for us all, with lots of music an(pleasant conversation, while fruit was handed round most of the time.

I must acknowledge, however, that but little of the credit for the success of the party belonged to me; that belonged to Graham and Saunders, the conversation of the latter seeming always to be supremely interesting to the ladies, with all of whom he conversed in turn.

As nine o'clock drew near, Graham suggested

that as this was just a nice family party, we should have family worship before breaking up. He asked Nellie to lead us on the piano, while we sang the 23rd Psalm, then taking up a Bible, he read through the 14th Chapter of John's Gospel without comment, but at these words, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you," he went back upon them and read them slowly a second time. We then sang, "What a Friend we have in Jesus," after which we all knelt, while Graham led us in prayer, commending us all to the care of our loving Heavenly Father.

The "Good-nights" were accompanied by warm expressions of heartfelt thanks for Graham's kindness, and in a few minutes he and I, along with Saunders (whom we had persuaded to stay for an hour longer) were once more ensconced before the fire in my room with our pipes charged.

That hour was one of the most profitable I have ever spent, for during the whole time we carried on an animated conversation upon subjects literary and social. To me it was quite a revelation to find a man like Saunders absolutely my master in these matters.

"Would you mind telling me," I asked, "how you came to take such an interest in social problems?" "There is not much to tell," said he. "My father was a working man and a Radical, and showed his Radicalism by putting me to service with a Tory laird." (I thought I

detected a little bitterness in his tone as he said this.) "This laird," he continued, "was neither better nor worse than the rest of his kind.

"He and his lady saw to it that I went to church regularly, and in my little room the only book I found was the Bible. I read it straight through, for I was an omnivorous reader, and when I came to the Sermon on the Mount I was brought to a standstill. For months I quietly studied the lives of all the people I knew who went to Church. I watched all that went on at Church and in connection with the Church, and I looked and looked again, and always in vain for any sign that the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount had the smallest effect upon the Church or its members.

"When I got older I dodged the Church services as often as possible, but being rather a quiet lad and fond of books, I kept clear of bad company, and devoted all my spare time to reading.

"I went right through Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray, and then took up Kingsley's novels, including 'Yeast' and 'Alton Lock'; next came Shakespeare, Whittier, Longfellow, and Tennyson, whose 'In Memoriam' I find unceasing delight in to this day, and finally tackled Carlyle's 'Sartor Resartus.' I say 'finally' because when I had read it and read it again I felt I had gained something of enormous value, had discovered the very treasure that my inmost spirit yearned for. Some years had elapsed since

I had laid the Bible aside (and, after all, Christendom practically lays the Bible aside most of the time), but when I had got a fair grip of the teaching of 'Sartor Resartus,' I went back to it as a humble inquirer after truth. But still the result was the same; though increased knowledge had made me more broad-minded, I could not square the pratice of the Church with the teaching of the New Testament. I examined the vast organism called the Church, and found it to comprise some thousands of buildings, more or less elaborate, some with spires, some without, but nearly all with expensive organs. It comprises the professional clergy, dressed up in distinctive uniforms and regarded as a caste by themselves, elders and deacons, presbyteries and assemblies, choirs and theological colleges, building committees and committees of other sorts; collections, sales of work, more collections, bazaars, and collections again. Millions of money are spent annually on so-called Church work, while the work itself, if directed to practical ends, might easily provide the necessities of life for all the poor and needy in this land. But what is the actual outcome of all the working of this gigantic organisation? Next to nothing! When I first faced the question, the inevitable answer positively staggered me; and once more I went back to the Book itself to endeavour to ascertain where the trouble lay.

"I found the Church ought simply to be the Kingdom of God in this world, and that all the guid-

ance required for members of that Kingdom is clearly given in that Book. Under the beneficent rule of the Kingdom there would be little need for punitive or restrictive law, for the governing principle of its members, that of love my neighbour, would so regulate their conduct to each other as to render such laws practically unnecessary. Obviously, were the Church thus to realise the ideal of its Founder, the practical demonstration of the possibility of a social life based upon the loftiest principle would be an attractive force that the world could hardly stand against, and we would be immeasurably nearer the fulfilment of the words of the Master when He said, 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.'

"But the painful fact remains that the Church dissipates its wealth and its energies on internecine strife, and on its machinery—producing nothing. Still industrial strife disturbs the land, still do capital and labour engage in deadly conflict, still is there want and woe and wretchedness and hideous vice in our midst, surging up to the very walls of the sanctuaries, but those within heed it not, or when compelled to notice it fling out some miserable dole. And when they discover that the masses no longer come to Church, they hold conferences to discuss the cause and cure of what they presumptuously call a disease, as if the masses would be any the better for merely going to Church. Invariably these Church people who are so much distressed over the shortcomings of the masses get no

further than holding prayer meetings, to call on the Almighty to do the things He has already shown them how to do in His Word.

"Let the Church be converted, and its witness alone will convert the world. But while waiting and hoping for this consummation, so much to be desired, I have made as impartial a study as possible of the work of politicians and philanthropists, in the endeavour to ascertain if social redemption could be accomplished by such agencies. But I failed completely to find anything in the nature of a permanent cure for social evils in recent legislation, while philanthropic effort seems chiefly confined to organised distribution of so-called charity. Now, is it not absurd, Mr. Watson, to talk of charity to the victims of injustice? It is a detestable hypocrisy. What they need is not charity but justice. Baffled in my endeavour to find the panacea for social ills in the Church, in politics, and in philanthropy, I made a renewed study of the economics of modern industrialism and commercialism, and came to the conclusion that many of these ills could be cured by the application of the principles of the Sermon on the Mount to industry and commerce. These years of my life being spent at a country mansion, the immediate sphere of my observation was restricted to the adjoining village of about a thousand inhabitants, a village regarded by summer visitors as ideal, its life idyllic, yet which furnished me with an object lesson of the

failure of the present system of so-called individualism. On the small scale there existed the same proportion of non-producing labour which is found everywhere. There were no fewer than four Churches, any one of which could have accommodated the total average congregations of the four. There were two banks, and, needless to say, one was quite sufficient; there were four bakers' shops, three shoemakers' shops, three butchers' shops, and about a dozen others held by drapers, grocers, and small general merchants. Then there were a number of retired people, living on the interest of their capital. There was also the laird, whose income of seven or eight thousand a year was chiefly derived from the land, from feu-duties, and from interest on his investment in the factory on the outskirts of the town. This factory employed from two to three hundred people, mostly girls, and made an average profit of ten thousand a year, paying dividends at the rate of from 7½ per cent. to 10 per cent. It might be said that there is nothing extraordinary in this description of a typical British village, but that is only because familiarity with the conditions has made us regard them as natural and inevitable. But I was struck with the excessive proportion of the non-producers to the productive workers, with the fact that the former had immensely greater incomes than the latter, and that *all* the incomes of every class were the fruits of labour on the land, in the workshop, and in the factory. The

daughter of the tradesman and of the labourer worked in the factory, turning out of bed in the early morning to start a day's drudgery, living her life under the most cramped conditions, the slave of the idle, of the money-makers.

On the other hand, the daughter of the clergyman, of the banker, of the well-to-do shopkeeper, of the laird, did not need to work, she left her own room and came down to breakfast when her sister of toil had already put in a couple of hours drudgery at the factory, dressing was her hardest work, studying the fashion her severest mental strain, and in short an average week of her ordinary life would have been reckoned a first-class annual holiday by the toiler. The workers when fully employed earned a bare living, when trade was quiet they had to do without work, therefore wages, therefore a living, but capital was sacred; dividends had to be made whether the worker lived well or ill, or lived at all. The life of the worker was a constant anxiety because of the irregularity of employment and the uncertainty of health. Not infrequently, too, I observed that illness among that class terminated fatally in cases which would have been cured under better conditions. And I asked myself, "Why should these things be?" when there is enough and to spare for all. Three things struck me; first, it was self-evident that the total annual income of the district was sufficient to keep the whole population in comfort were it more equally distributed; second, if three-

fourths of the non-producers became productive workers that income would be considerably increased; and third, if the necessaries of life were produced and distributed on a co-operative principle, the on-cost would be reduced, and commodities would be cheaper. Can you be surprised, therefore, that I arrived at the conclusion that the position of the worker was only half as good as it ought to be, and as it might be, under a sane system, and that that improved system would have to be founded on the principle of "Love thy neighbour?"

It was, as I afterwards found, characteristic of the man that his autobiography had little of self in it; his life story was that of a man striving determinedly for, and wholly absorbed in, the attainment of the highest social ideal he could conceive. During his discourse Graham and I preserved unbroken silence, though it was easy to see in the expression of Graham's face that he was in cordial agreement with all that was said. I thanked Saunders for his interesting statement, and promised to study the subject more closely for myself. "Do so by all means," he said, with decision; "apart from the advantage to the cause which many of us have at heart nowadays, you will be a better man for the study and will find life more intensely interesting. Now, perhaps you will excuse me, it is time that I should go. Good-night, sir, good-night Mr. Graham." He shook hands with a combination of warmth and respect which became him in a

unique manner and was gone in a moment, swiftly yet almost noiselessly.

Graham turned to me with an unmistakably triumphant smile and asked, "What do you think of him, Watson?"

"I think so much and want to learn so much more, that I must ask you to repeat your question to-morrow morning. I am dead tired after this well-filled but thoroughly enjoyable day, and now I feel that I could enjoy by bed."

"Quite right, old man, quite right," he replied. "Hope you will be all the better for this Christmas Day. I am inviting myself to breakfast with you in the morning. Good-night."

CHAPTER IV.

Tragedy Gives a Man to the World.

"What do you think of him?" repeated Graham, as again we sat down to breakfast the following morning.

There had been a complete change of weather since the previous day; morning broke sunless and cheerless, and even at nine o'clock the city was enveloped in semi-darkness, so that we found it necessary to keep the gas burning in order to dispel the gloom.

"You ask what I think of Saunders," said I. "Well, I find it difficult to express myself concerning him, but he is certainly one of the most remarkable men I have ever met. He is original, he is strong, so strong that he seems to be complete master of himself, while his whole outlook upon life appears to be that of a man who has much to give to the world and small desire to take from it. He has the power to be a Napoleon among men, but his ideals impose such restrictions upon him as prevent him abusing his powers in the manner of Napoleon."

"Well said, Watson," said Graham, with undisguised satisfaction. "I am delighted with

your judgment, and still more with Saunders that such brief acquaintance with him as you have had should have created such an impression. Your reference to his Napoleonic power is terribly true. It is well for society that that man is an optimist, that he believes (and regulates his life by the belief) in the ultimate triumph of right, without recourse to destructive weapons, which indeed he regards as worse than futile. Were he to despair of the final triumph of his principles I am certain he would stir up the workers of this country, not only to demand but to take possession of everything, and clear out the parasites.

"You would notice even in his conversation that he abused no one; his condemnation was for the evil system alone." "Yes," I replied, "I noticed that particularly, and his words had more weight with me on that account. By the way, you have not told me how or when you got to know him."

A mysterious smile flickered momentarily on Graham's face, and as quickly passed, like a cloud driven across the face of the sun. A look of grief akin to anguish settled upon his face as in measured tones he unfolded the story of his acquaintance with Saunders. "It is now thirteen years since I met Saunders first. He was then a butler with some people I know in the country. Circumstances favoured my inclination to make a friend of him, and, as you perceive, I have learned much from him. Two or three

years later he married, and for a little over a year his life seemed to be supremely happy. He was perfectly mated, his wife being one of those sensible women who know when they have a treasure of a husband, and when I dropped in, as I did occasionally, for a cup of tea and a chat, I was always sure of a kindly welcome and a very pleasant hour.

"Then when Saunders' cup of happiness seemed to be full, it was dashed to the ground with a sickening crash.

"It was a bright summer afternoon, the young mother with her four months' old baby girl was strolling round the garden and had just stepped out of the gate to welcome her approaching husband, when a motor car swept round the bend from the opposite direction to that in which she was looking, struck mother and child, and in a moment both were in eternity.

"It happened that I was with Saunders that afternoon, and together we shouted out in horror, but nothing could avert the awful tragedy. Never can the scene that ensued be effaced from my memory. The car was stopped, of course, and the occupants, a titled gentleman with whom I was acquainted, and his driver got out and rushed to where their victims lay, arriving simultaneously with ourselves as we dashed to the spot.

"God help you, Saunders," was all I could say as I laid my hand gently on his shoulder. For one moment he stood stunned, then the next

he turned his eyes with a terrible look in them full upon the baronet, his mouth set firm and hard, his hands clenched, but not a word did he utter. As I looked upon him, beads of sweat broke out on his forehead, evidence of unspeakable pent-up agony, then his features relaxed, his lips parted, and he grasped the proffered hand of the baronet, whose agitation and distress were pitiable to witness.

"Can—can you forgive me?" said the latter, tears standing in his eyes. A momentary pause, then, "In God's Name I do," said Saunders, in a low, firm voice. His self-mastery was sublime.

Kneeling in the dust he raised the prostrate form of his poor dead wife, the child tightly locked in her embrace, the mother's first instinct having been to attempt to shield her little one. Bending over them he kissed both, but did not trust himself to speak, nor did we give him occasion to. Silently and gently we released the child from the dead mother's arms, and reverently bore them into the cottage, leaving Saunders for awhile alone with his dead.

Standing outside, the baronet with grief-stricken face and averted gaze addressed me. "Mr. Graham, this was an accident, a very horrible one, but I shall never cease to blame myself for it. I dare not offer apologies or compensation to that poor fellow in there, but it may ease my conscience somewhat if I penalise myself heavily. Will you be good enough to

accept a thousand pounds from me on his behalf? You can arrange matters with him later."

"Yes, sir," I agreed, "it is all you can do, and I am glad you do it so handsomely. When he gets over the first bitterness of his loss he will think kindly of you for your own sorrow." After the funeral I accompanied Saunders back to the cottage. For a time neither of us spoke, our intercourse was that of spirit only, each knowing well the feeling of the other better than if expressed in words. Then the inevitable happened, the strong man gave way beneath his burden.

"God in heaven, God in heaven," he cried, "what does it all mean? What *can* it mean? Why should these things be?" and he groaned in the endeavour to stifle his sobs. Standing over him where he sat, I took his head in my hands caressingly and told him not to restrain himself longer, and together we gave way to our weak human nature."

The painful vividness of the recollection was too much for Graham. He had risen from the table and was pacing the room as in broken tones he tried to finish the narrative. "Say no more about it, old chap," I interposed, "leave me to imagine the rest." Indeed, I was deeply affected myself, both by the pathos of the story and by the feeling displayed by my friend.

"I need not say much more about it," said Graham, "but I want you to know a little more of the history of Saunders. I stayed a couple

of days with him, and made arrangements for a month's tour on the continent preliminary to his embarking on some new sphere of life, for he had told me of his intention to leave the district for ever.

I thoroughly agreed with him in that, and together we discussed plans for the future during our journeyings abroad. It rejoiced me greatly to observe how Saunders fought and conquered his doubts and soreness of heart; he simply seemed to lose all thought of himself in his study of social conditions wherever he went, and especially in his sympathy for the oppressed and down-trodden. I also know, however, of the awful nights he passed through during those few weeks; but now, looking at it all retrospectively, I would not wish anything changed, for, after all, his great loss has been the great gain of all who are thrown into contact with him. To slightly alter Tennyson's words:

> The shade by which his life was crossed,
> Which made a desert of his mind,
> Has made him kindlier with his kind,
> And like to her whose sight is lost.

"In process of time his grief became less acute, and more than once he has told me how much cause he had for thankfulness for the perfect serenity and happiness of his short married life, and for the pure and hallowed memory it was his privilege to retain. It was the night after our arrival from the continent that we stood at the window over there in Cranston's Hotel, looking

down upon the crowds passing below, and I told him of the thousand pounds I had been commissioned with in his behalf. As I expected, he would not touch a penny of it for himself, but on pointing out to him that his acceptance of it was essential to the baronet's peace of mind, he reluctantly agreed, only he insisted that in discussing his plans for the future, we should take into account his desire to devote this particular sum entirely to purposes of benevolence, as a memorial to his late wife and child. Though I knew his services as butler were highly valued, and he himself greatly respected, I was not surprised to learn that private service had always been repugnant to him, and that he would not return to it upon any consideration. He had saved a few hundred pounds, but in view of the absence of a business training, the problem of his future career was not easy to solve. His natural aptitude, however, for cooking and purveying led him to decide upon starting a restaurant, and for the last nine years he has been very successful in that line. He has two establishments, one for business men in the new town, and one in the High Street for working people. As it happens, nothing could have suited him better; the thousand pounds was invested in the latter business, and that unpretentious restaurant has been a haven of refuge, the very gate of heaven to hundreds of poor souls, for not one copper of profit will Saunders take out of it.

It is not only that he supplies food to the

hungry, but he gives *himself*—his time, his counsel, his sympathy, his practical help; all are at the service of the broken in body and in spirit.

The place is also the rendezvous of a small coterie of men and women like-minded to himself, and there the plans for bringing in the new social era are being discussed and developed with a view to their practical application at an early date." While Graham was speaking we had risen from the table (we did not seem to care much for breakfast that morning), drawn our chairs towards the fire, and set our pipes agoing.

CHAPTER V.

How the Poor Live—and Die!

"Are you not rather sanguine, Graham, when you talk of the early realisation of what I like to think of as the 'Love thy neighbour' principle?" I meditatively inquired. "Do you base your hopes upon the remarkable legislation initiated by Lloyd George?"

Graham stared at me in blank speechless astonishment. "Base—my—hopes—on—Lloyd George's—legislation? Oh yes, certainly I do—in a way; on the certainty of the absolute failure of his no doubt well-intended efforts.

"You are thinking of Old Age Pensions and National Insurance. My dear sir, what is the A B C of taxation under the present system?" he asked with emphasis. "Is it not that it is practically impossible to tax capital while capital is recognised as having the first right to an 'adequate return,' and that therefore labour must produce the extra taxation in one way or another.

"Old Age Pensions! Five bob a week!" he jerked out the words, and turned almost savagely upon me. "When you get to seventy years of

age and have no money and no friends to care for you, given the choice of dragging out a miserable and hopeless existence on five shillings a week, or of a thoroughly satisfying dose of chloroform after a jolly good meal, wouldn't you infinitely prefer the latter. Of course, you would.

"No, in the new era which must shortly dawn the system will *prevent* the disease, instead of applying quack remedies to diseases which are the inevitable product of a diseased system.

"As for the National Insurance Bill, again do I fail to see what benefit it is to confer upon the country. It is considered almost blasphemy by some of my Liberal friends to criticise Lloyd George, but with all my belief in the man's goodness of heart, I cannot shut my eyes to the folly of his argument. He claims in one breath that he gives the workers ninepence for fourpence, and almost in the same breath claims that the Bill is so framed as to prevent loss to the employers! Where then is the fivepence to come from, for ninepence for fourpence is equivalent to fivepence for nothing? Of course so many millions are to be contributed by the State, but that simply means that the country will be taxed for the money, so the workers ultimately provide the fivepence themselves. And not only that, but they will have to provide many thousands a year besides to pay a regiment of new officials who work the scheme. Ninepence for fivepence, shouts this political cheap-jack,

the same man who so vigorously denounced tariff reformers for attempting to bribe the working classes into supporting their movement. Isn't it a pity to see the judgment of such a good man warped by the blighting influence of party politics?"

"It is," I replied, "but, all the same, I don't see how you can consistently condemn Old Age Pensions and National Insurance, for, in my opinion, these are Socialism pure and simple."

"Not quite," said Graham, without a moment's hesitation, "but they are steps in the direction of Socialism, and as such I join with other Socialists in the feeling of satisfaction that the desire of the Government to secure the support of the Labour Party is compelling the former to introduce legislation, the logical outcome of which must be Socialism, pure and simple.

"Old Age Pensions being recognised as right and just in principle, it clearly cannot be right and just to fix the age at seventy and the amount at five shillings. If people ten, twenty, or thirty years younger need and deserve pensions, they must have them, and if they need more than five shillings, they must get more.

"The same argument applies to National Insurance. If it is right and just in principle for Lloyd George to give us ninepence for fourpence or fivepence for nothing, we are perfectly entitled to ask him to give us all he can lay his hands on for nothing; and we must see that we get it."

At this we both laughed, but Graham quickly resumed his criticism of the Government's social legislation. "After all," he went on, "at their best these measures fall far short of accomplishing anything like what their author claims. For example, take our little party last night; these Bills will not benefit any one of our friends to the smallest degree.

"To begin with, Mrs. Smith and Nellie can never derive any advantage from them. Then in the case of Mrs. Brown and her unfortunate daughter, their position entirely precludes the application of the much-lauded benefits of the Bills to them. The late Mr. Brown, I understand, was a clerk in a lawyer's office; his salary never exceeded a hundred and seventeen pounds a year. Mrs. Brown did not enjoy good health, and when their child was born and turned out to be—well—just what she is, I suppose I must say half imbecile, it seemed as if their troubles would never end, for it was almost impossible to cut down expenditure, as they had to keep up an appearance befitting Mr. Brown's position, else he might not keep that position long. Nor did he, poor man, for his health broke down. Under this lovely individualistic system of ours he had to struggle on, when he ought to have been cared for and nursed back to health and strength, and some half-dozen years ago he joined the countless host of victims of mammon.

"The hundred pounds of insurance money, and about enough money in the savings bank to pay

his funeral expenses was all that was left to his poor widow and child.

"The keeping up of appearances was now out of the question, so Mrs. Brown took a two-roomed house in a stair in Rose Street, sent her girl to school, and tried to earn a living at some genteel occupation.

"The employment, however, was irregular, the pay small, and she quickly found that the only work she was qualified to do, and which would yield enough to depend on for a living, was cleaning up lawyers' offices, and serving lunch to one or two of those who employed her. She makes a bare living at this, but you will see at once that Old Age Pensions and National Insurance are no use to her.

"Poor old Simpson, too, is another whose position is in no way improved by these Bills. The story of his life is a very sad one. He is not nearly so old as he looks, his age is only fifty-six, but the burden of life, the struggle for existence under cruelly adverse conditions has aged him terribly. He has led an irreproachable life, but never got a chance, nor has he ever had the ability to make headway. Yet, though an unskilled labourer, he supported his widowed and infirm mother until her death; at forty years of age he married, and for a considerable time got along tolerably well, but three or four years ago Mrs. Simpson fell a victim to cancer and died after nearly two years' suffering. During this time Simpson, who earned a living by making pipe-

clay for housewives, and selling it from door to door, toiled like a slave in the heroic endeavour to provide his bed-ridden wife with the necessaries of life and an occasional trifling luxury. It was about this time that I discovered them. I can remember dropping in one winter evening. Knocking at the door of the one-roomed house (there were about thirty similar houses in that one stair), Mrs. Simpson in a weak, tired voice bade me enter, and I stepped within; the gas was turned down to the lowest, the fire was but smouldering embers, and the poor patient lay alone in the semi-darkness, waiting for the coming of her husband, waiting for the coming of the angel of death. Turning up the gas, I observed with pleasure evidences of pathetic efforts to make these four walls a home. Two or three framed almanac pictures hung on the walls, linoleum was on the floor with strips of carpet laid down as rugs, a chest of drawers, a table and a few chairs completed the furnishing of the room, and everything was clean and tidy. Soon after my arrival Simpson came home, face and hands blue with the cold, for he had neither overcoat nor gloves. It was after eight o'clock, and though he looked famished and exhausted, he gave no sign of wanting a meal, but sat down at the bedside of his dying wife, her hand clasped in his.

"Few words passed between them, and all the while his face wore the expressionless look of dumb-driven cattle. Hopeless despair sat there combined with helpless resignation.

" Of course, I did the needful, and did my little best to cheer them up, but I felt mean in the thought of bestowing what is called charity upon those who were the victims of social injustice.

" My inquiry elicited the fact that some kindly disposed neighbour had represented their case to the Parochial authorities, as one deserving of outdoor relief. An official was sent to investigate, but he decided that no help could be given, on the grounds that the Simpson's seemed tolerably comfortable, that if they sold some of their furniture it would bring in a little money, and that the husband was an able-bodied man capable of earning a livelihood. Mrs. Simpson died shortly afterwards, and I got the little man introduced to Mrs. Brown as a lodger, and he has stayed with her since.

" Now, tell me what your Old Age Pensions and National Insurance can do for such a case as this.

" The glorious prospect is held out that in fourteen years hence he will get a pension of five shillings a week! But I fervently hope that long ere that time he will have joined his wife, unless in the meantime our social system is changed drastically and for the better."

Graham paused for a little, and supposing he had overlooked Julia Macdonald, I asked him how she was affected by the existing system, and what prospect there was that women of her class would be any better under Socialism.

" Make no mistake about Julia Macdonald," said he, " she is not to be reckoned as belonging

to the unfortunate class. Notwithstanding the environment in which she has been brought up and her life-long familiarity with vice and other social evils, she is pure at heart, and so far from being worthy of condemnation, she is entitled to sympathy and even admiration for the noble sacrifice of herself in a manner entirely abhorent to her, so that she might provide for the little ones of the household. She gave herself for others in a very liberal way, and after all, is not that following her Redeemer, though in a somewhat distorted fashion.

"That is what the world needs to-day as always—men and women who will give themselves for its betterment.

"And when I think of what that poor girl has given, and what it must cost her, even though she has never counted the cost, my feeling of pity is mingled with rage at the society which not only permits but creates such things.

"I knew a little about Julia Macdonald before you told me, Watson, and have always considered her as fine a type of womanhood as I have met. She is really beautiful, the more so that she carries herself as if quite unconscious of it, her manner is gracious and modest in spite of the awful life she has embarked upon lately, and she has that natural grace which would make her a creditable figure in a society drawing-room, instead of the wretched hovel which is all the home she knows. Such a fair flower of fresh young womanhood to be sullied and crushed and

flung on the refuse heap. No, by heaven, that must not be; I *will* prevent that."

To the outside world Graham was one of the coolest and most imperturbable of mortals, but in private life the misfortunes, and especially the victimisation of others, transformed him into quite another being. And I am not sure but that this other aspect of his character was the more admirable, witnessing as it did to a genuine goodness of heart which was even woman-like in its tenderness, nor was the effect lessened by the strong, deep, and man-like expression of it. Never before had I observed the best qualities of man and woman blending so perfectly in one individual, yet he was always so entirely natural and straightforward that there seemed nothing incongruous in it. As an example of his thoughtfulness I may mention that though he never became a total abstainer, the subject did not arise again between us, and he never again asked me to have a drink. I incline to the belief that he would have become an abstainer himself were it not for his determination to show an example of moderation, and that a man might be a humble, sincere, and devout Christian without being anti-everything.

He had been pacing the room while speaking of Julia, a habit of his when deeply moved, and after gazing out of the window for a few minutes in silence, he resumed his seat and his discourse.

"You were asking, Watson, how women like Julia are affected by existing social conditions.

Well, one is in great measure the product of the other. The present social conditions are cause, Julia the effect.

"The traditional status of woman as the subordinate of man is not wholesome for the one or the other, and does not make for the highest development of the race. The difference between man and woman is chiefly physical, each is indispensable to the other, and the proper relationship between them is that of each being the complement of the other. This is a fundamental principle of social life, and it is systematically outraged under present conditions.

"Women may work the same hours as men, but for half the pay. Such is the chivalry of modern industrialism and commercialism; it brutally tramples upon and defrauds the weak; men are in a position to buy women, and the beautiful law of supply and demand ordains that it must be so.

"This aspect of the social problem is such a serious matter, a subject so vitally important, that in its discussion it is futile to blink the facts, puerile to call a spade an agricultural implement. The primary facts are these, that natural attraction of the sexes is instinctive and inherent in the human race, and that society should be so organised as to promote the inter-relationship of the sexes on a wholesome and rational basis. It may be said that the marriage law fulfils this requirement, but the assertion is an absolute travesty of the fact. Nothing can be more evident than that our artificial standards of social

life interfere with the free and natural commingling of the sexes. Between class and class barriers are raised so that love, affinity, and mutual respect count for nothing in most cases where there is not enough money to maintain a certain position in society. As a result women are invariably the sufferers, being frequently obliged either to remain unmarried, or to marry a man whose money and social standing are his only recommendations. It is idle to pretend that all women high up in the social scale are impervious to the appeal of the sex instinct, and therefore we need not be surprised that many of these unmarried and unhappily married women form alliances outside of the marriage contract. Is it, then, too much to say that the money standard held by society is a cause of prostitution even in its own select circles?

"But when we come lower down in the social scale, the indictment against the existing system is a more serious one. A little reflection on the conditions of labour in factories and shops and on the housing of the working class, makes it easy to understand how there are so many women on the street.

"Female shop assistants, warehouse employees, milliners and dressmakers, all have to keep up appearances to a greater or lesser extent, and seldom are they paid a wage sufficient to give them a decent living, and dress them as they are expected to be dressed.

"Factory hands again (a horrible term) are per-

haps better paid when in full employment, but they are more subject to irregularity of employment through the fluctuations of commerce, and every hour's loss of employment means loss of wages. Here is an army of at least a million girls and young women earning at most a bare existence, trained to dependence on others, their prospects of matrimony, their natural destiny, a mere chance, and even when attained generally a life of drudgery. They go out to work at any time from six to nine o'clock in the morning, and on returning in the evening not uncommonly find little to entertain them at home. The housing problem has much to do with that of the women of the street. If a man, his wife, and a fairly large family are herded together in two or three stuffy little rooms, what wonder is it that members of the family seek recreation on the street and at the music hall. Life in a working-class tenement is not a whit better than in barracks. I have seen in Leeds whole streets of back-to-back houses, where they have no back greens, no through ventilation, every window in the house facing the dingy street, houses built to stable the workers. Keeping these things in mind, and not forgetting that this vast army of girls and women have the same sex instincts as their more fortunate sisters, it must be apparent that the temptations which beset them are overwhelming. Tens of thousands yield to them for one reason and another; sometimes it may be from inherent depravity of nature, but it must be remembered

that their environment is a field in which seeds of temptation germinate readily. I grant that *all* sin and its attendant misery is not caused by unfortunate heredity and evil surroundings, but clearly these are potent factors in perpetuating social ills.

"Take into account also that tens of thousands of men are brought up to what are called respectable occupations, clerking and so forth, that the vast majority of them never receive a salary sufficient to enable them to marry and maintain the position they were reared in, and it is overwhelmingly proved that the false standards of modern society, commercialism and industrialism, are chiefly responsible for the existence of the social evil. Not content with creating this evil, society, which is itself the culprit, metes out heavy punishment to its victims. I can think of nothing more brutal than the treatment to which these unfortunate women are subjected, and the calling of illegitimate children bastards. They are hounded out of society, and sometimes into prison; they are made to realise that they are hopeless outcasts, upon them falls the penalty of their sin and the sin of others, and if their sin be a crime against the State, the men who are their fellow criminals escape. Society, of course, has a right to protect itself, but it might well show more discrimination and mercy in its judgments, in consideration of the fact that the evils it condemns are the natural fruits of the existing social system. And now I ask you, what interest has

Julia in Old Age Pensions or National Insurance? And further, so long as the present system obtains I cannot conceive of any legislation which will cure the social disease, for no matter what benefits may be conferred upon certain classes of the workers, it is undeniable that the whole burden of these will fall upon productive industry, either in the form of lower wages, worse conditions of labour, or dearer commodities as is presently the case. Why, as a matter of fact, it is perfectly clear that large numbers of the poor are made poorer by Lloyd George's so-called social legislation, for great masses of them do not come within the scope of his Bills, but have to help to produce the extra revenue required by paying more for the necessaries of life.

"There is only one thing certain in connection with these Bills, and that is that they cost the country an immense amount of money for the machinery and officials that work them." I had listened with unbroken attention to Graham's harangue, and though I felt I should like to combat his argument, I did not know how to go about it.

I said as much, but he only remarked that he was not surprised. Here I thought was individualism indeed. This man with such marked sympathy for the weak and the oppressed, yet fearlessly expressing his belief in the futility of Old Age Pensions and National Insurance, measures which had been hailed by tens of thousands as establishing the Kingdom of God on earth.

CHAPTER VI.

A Socialist's Outlook Upon Contemporary Politics.

Graham's candid expression of independent opinion on current politics gave me food for reflection, and for some little time I said nothing, but it also whetted my appetite for further revelation of his attitude towards other important questions.

"What," I asked, "is your outlook, as a Socialist, upon such subjects as Home Rule, the House of Lords, and the referendum?"

"Well," he replied, "let us begin by considering the first subject you mention, Home Rule. If that phrase merely stands for the conferring upon districts or provinces within these realms of increased self-governing powers, I am entirely in favour of it; but if, on the other hand, it means division into separate nationalities, then am I just as strongly opposed to it, and for this reason, that I have no sympathy with the idea or sentiment of nationalism. Why should I boast of my Scottish nationality? I might as well have been a South

Sea Islander for all I had to do with the accident of my birth; but as I had to be born somewhere, I am just as well pleased to be a citizen of Great Britain as of anywhere else.

"Moreover, the spirit of nationalism is inimical to the spirit of brotherhood, and is chiefly founded upon a sentiment which is a relic of barbaric times. There is doubtless something to be said for nationalism, but we must accept the lesson of history, and my reading of it is that the spirit of nationalism has been the fertile field wherein ambitious and rapacious rulers have sown the seeds of jealousy and strife. The idea of war between England and Scotland has only to be mentioned to be dismissed as an absurdity; and yet we talk of war between the German nation and the British nation as almost inevitable! Why should not the idea of war between Germany and Britain be regarded as equally absurd? Because they are separate nations! Quite so; therefore the sooner we have some sort of union with Germany, the better. The time when

Man to man the world o'er, shall brothers be

will never come while the old spirit of nationalism prevails.

"And now for the House of Lords. It must be obvious to you, Watson, that that is an institution to which I am utterly opposed.

"The possession of a vote implies the ability of the voter to exercise it; and though at present

we have a mere travesty of government of the people by the people, that is only a phase in democratic evolution, and will pass as the electors realise the futility of the existing party system. When that time comes, and it is rapidly approaching, the men elected by the people may be safely entrusted with the power of government; then would a second chamber be superfluous, and, as such, a nuisance. Of course, it is easy to conceive of circumstances in which a democratic government might doubt its right to pass certain legislation, and it is at this stage where the referendum should come into play, for the referendum is of the very essence of democratic government, and no more complete expression can be given to the phrase 'trust the people,' than through its medium.

"Yet, the party which most loudly proclaims that it trusts the people most fiercely opposes the referendum! If conscience makes cowards of us all, just as surely does party make hypocrites of partisans.

"But under any conditions of government I would have the House of Lords abolished, and not only the House of Lords, but the very title of Lord as applied to any man. The time for that sort of nonsense is past. I know of only one Lord in the universe.

"The very existence of kings, dukes, lords, baronets, and squires, courts a revolution in these days of enlightenment and democratic franchise; though, of course, the Socialist who takes his

stand on the 'Love thy neighbour' principle desires to effect the change by a process of justice and goodwill to all men.

"The workers of the country, that is to say the great mass of the people, are waking up to the fact that productive industry is the base of a pyramid, rising tier on tier, of exploiters of labour, money mongers, clergy, knights, baronets, and so on right up to king. These are all simply the parasites of industry, and form a crushing burden upon the workers who are compelled to labour to support them.

"The hour is at hand when the workers will have something momentous to say on the subject."

I found it difficult to take exception to Graham's argument or to his facts, notwithstanding that they gave a rude shock to my traditionally British instincts. After some little consideration I spoke.

"I think I know what you are driving at, Graham; but do you really suggest that the State should confiscate the land and means of production?"

He looked at me quizzically, drawing vigorously at his pipe, then said, in a mildly satirical way, "That would be a most disgraceful thing to suggest, wouldn't it? But why use such an unpleasant word as 'confiscation?'

"We do not charge the employer of labour with confiscating a portion of his employees' wages—that is simply the legitimate profit he

makes when, in the goodness of his heart, he provides work for the worker; we do not charge the shopkeeper with theft when he charges poor people a bigger price for goods than their cost plus a fair charge for distribution—it is agreed that he may take just as much as he can get, values being so beautifully regulated by the law of supply and demand; we do not charge stockbrokers with robbery when they sell at a fictitiously enhanced price shares they did nothing to increase the value of—that is the fitting reward of their industry in a noble profession; we do not charge lawyers with dishonesty when they make twice the amount of work necessary, and therefore twice the amount of fees out of a job with which they have been entrusted—that is recognised as the customary method of earning money in their profession; nor would we dream of charging landlords with fraud because, taking advantage of the needs of a community, they charge, say, three hundred pounds per acre per annum for the privilege of building on *their* land—the mere fact that the landlord did nothing to increase the worth of the land beyond its agricultural value having nothing to do with the case. But for the generosity of landlords in permitting us to build and live on *their* land, where would we all be?

"Yet an ungrateful people are muttering questions about where did the landlords get the land, and some other people who profess to have inquired into the matter are saying quite loudly

that they got the land by confiscating it from the people by one means and another.

"And I am credibly informed that when the people have learned what a splendid investment for themselves it would be to subscribe a half-penny per head, per week, to send four hundred members of their own to represent them in the House of Commons (instead of the six hundred lawyers, manufacturers, landlords and financiers who represent their own class chiefly) these members will begin at the beginning by passing a small and unpretentious act to the effect that the people will resume possession of *their* land.

"It must be a great relief to you, Watson, to know that such a disagreeable word as confiscate need never be used, for you must agree that resumption of possession is quite a different thing from confiscation."

"That is all very well, Graham," said I "but a man of your fine feeling can scarcely look complacently on the spoliation and consequent hardships of the classes now in possession."

"Your kindly regard for these excellent people does you infinite credit," he replied, "but I think it will ease your mind to know they will be no worse off than you and I, and I am selfish enough to feel that what is good enough for me is good enough for them. Besides, if their possession and enjoyment of the great part of the wealth of this country causes hardship and misery to millions of people, I range myself on the side of the millions every time. Further,

I am not so sure but that your sympathy for the classes now in possession is misplaced; we will relieve them of the responsibility of managing their great estates (and incidentally of the unearned income they derive from them), and they will always be assured of a decent living, with opportunities for the enjoyment of life to the fullest extent that is good for them or anybody else; the land will not be carted away, rivers will continue to flow, trees will not cease to grow, nor the rain to descend, nor the sun to shine, and they will be able to walk over the land and admire the rising of the sun and its setting, and all the other beauties of the natural world the same as they do now, and perhaps better, for these things make strongest appeal to the simplest tastes, and in time they will have cultivated a simple taste for various reasons.

"The more I think of it, the more enthusiastic do I become in my regard for the future well-being of the classes who at present are unduly burdened with the cares of riches, and are often driven to distraction in the effort to keep them from taking wings. Why, every now and again we read in the newspapers of the suicide of a man who owned ten thousand pounds, and because he had lost half of it in some speculation, was haunted with the dread of being unable to keep the wolf from the door. Really Watson, we must do something for these people. You may criticise what I have said as much as you like; all that I ask is that you take the 'love thy neigh-

bour ' principle as the standard of judgment, and I venture to think you will find the application of that principle involves the reform of society on lines such as I have suggested.

" Now, old man, I have a treat in store for you. I have told Mrs. Smith not to bother about dinner for us; we are going round to Saunders' café for lunch, so get on your coat and hat and let us be off."

CHAPTER VII.

Not Dreamers Only.

My visit to the café in the High Street interested me greatly. Saunders was out when we arrived, but dinner was just being served when he entered and in response to Graham's invitation sat down to dine with us. Doubtless, owing to our failure to make a good breakfast, Graham and I partook heartily of the dinner, after which we had Saunders' permission to smoke. While thus regaling ourselves we were joined by three friends of Graham and Saunders. They were introduced to me as John Alexander Elder, a professional man in the city, and Socialist member of the Town Council and School Board; Robert Davidson, a retired schoolmaster; and David Ewen, a wholesale merchant carrying on a business of considerable magnitude.

Mr. Ewen was a man in the prime of life, shrewd in his judgments, careful of speech, yet transparent in his honesty, while kindliness shone out of his blue eyes.

This latter trait struck me on looking round the company as characteristic of them all; the face

of each man was marked by firmness and decision, not of a harsh and assertive type, but blended with and beautified by that unaffected kindliness of expression which in women is called sweet and winsome, but on the faces of these earnest men, stamped them as nobly strong. During my years of travelling I had been thrown into contact with all classes of men, estimable and otherwise, but never before had I been privileged to have familiar intercourse with a whole group of men who I felt must be regarded as gentlemen in the best meaning of the word.

Mr. Davidson, who was several years the senior of Mr. Ewen, had resigned the head-mastership of a school, having a small competency sufficient for the maintenance of his wife and himself, and as they had no family, they were able to devote themselves to the social work in which they were interested, especially among the poor bairns. As Mr. Davidson put it in the course of a short conversation I had with him, he did not see the use of drudging away at work which there were plenty of men able and willing to do, when he had all the money he required. He would rather spend the years in which he felt physically and mentally strong in the propagating of the Socialist doctrine, from the practice of which he believed so much good would be derived, than put off the work he had so much at heart until he would be unable to carry it on effectively.

Mr. Elder was the youngest of the three as it happened, and although this was my first meeting

with him, I was not unacquainted with his record of service on the School Board, and in the Town Council. Of such excellence was this record that the most violent and virulent opponents of Socialism had been unable to organise opposition to his return at the Town Council election some weeks previously, when he was allowed a walk-over. His brief private conversation with me, as well as his share in the general talk of the company, served to reveal him as a man of very fine feeling, in demeanour unassuming and unobtrusive, while his fund of knowledge seemed encyclopædic.

It is not my purpose to narrate the conversation in which we engaged for the next couple of hours; to do so were but to recapitulate much that has been written in the preceding pages of this book. But I do feel bound to set down this fact that throughout the whole of that afternoon no flippant jest, no blasphemy against the Creator, no coarse or even careless remark about women, no cruel taunt or biting sarcasm concerning the monied classes was uttered by any one of these five Socialists.

I was irresistibly compelled to say within myself, "Were the professed followers of Christ to adorn His doctrine even as these men adorn the doctrine of Socialism, how much sweeter the world would be."

On looking back upon that time, I acknowledge the reflection was a stupid one, for these men were indeed adorning the doctrine of Jesus Christ,

whether consciously or otherwise. It may be possible to be a Christian without being a Socialist (I cannot dogmatise upon that point), but the Socialism of these five seemed to me the logical expression, the inevitable result of the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, summed up as it was by our Lord in the vital precept, Love God and love thy neighbour." How true it is that living epistles are more attractive, and make more powerful appeal than all the sermons ever preached, or all the essays on ethics and morality ever published. I had listened with great interest to the inculcation of the principles of Socialism. and was so far convinced as to its merits as an agency for the elevating and purifying of social life that I had lost my antipathy to it, or rather it may be my prejudice against the name; but it was only when I came into personal contact with these real live Socialists, leading such exemplary lives, that I felt constrained to become a Socialist myself.

I had tried Conservatism and I had tried Liberalism to ascertain if there was anything of value in their principles or in their practice, but I found it to be simply a case of the pot calling the kettle black, and of the kettle returning the compliment. The conclusion I had already come to was that their judgment of each other was thoroughly justified. Having thus an open mind, apart from a lingering suspicion commonly held in those days, that Socialism was allied to Atheism, free love, and other unlovely things, I

was probably a fit subject for conversion to the Socialist doctrine, and the last shadow of doubt as to the wisdom and propriety of my becoming a Socialist was dispelled by witnessing the fruits of the doctrine in the lives of my Socialist friends.

When Graham and I had taken leave of our friends, I informed him on our way home of my decision to throw in my lot with his party.

"My dear chap," he said, clapping me on the shoulder and wringing my hand, "I am more delighted than I can express. You will never regret your decision. Life will have a new zest for you, a deeper interest, and I feel confident that you will have the joy of seeing a new dispensation established in our land. That new day is dawning even now, and when the light of a true and vital principle of social life floods the earth, we shall, standing in that light, look back upon the squalor and sordidness of the present struggle for existence with wonderment at the vicious and insane folly of it all."

Prophetic words, spoken seven years ago, but already well on the way to fulfilment, as was bound to be the case, for whatsoever things are *true and of good report will endure and must ultimately prevail.*

CHAPTER VIII.

A Mystery Unveiled.

Daylight had gone when we returned to our lodgings, and as we drew near we discerned by its own lights a large and handsome motor-car opposite the doorway.

The chauffeur approached us, and addressing Graham said, "I have a message for you, sir, of serious importance." "I should think it must be that it brings you here," said Graham; "what is it?"

"Have you not received the telegram?" asked the chauffeur. "It was sent off fully a couple of hours ago."

"I have been out for three hours," replied Graham, "so probably the telegram awaits me upstairs." "No doubt, sir," said the chauffeur, "I sent it off as I set out. His Grace has had another shock, and the doctor says he has not long to live. Will you hurry your preparations for the journey and return with me in the car." "I will be with you in a few minutes," said Graham, and together we went into the house. He was manifestly upset, but maintained the calm and collected bearing which was his wont. Entering his

room I said I was sorry to see he had bad news, and enquired if it concerned a near relative. Looking at me steadily for a little as if uncertain how much to tell me, he said, "Yes, Watson, it does concern a near relative. I need not conceal the truth from you longer, as it must soon be revealed. It is my father who has been struck down with paralysis."

"His Grace, your father, you the son of a duke!" I exclaimed in amazement. I am afraid my face as well as my voice betrayed the awe and reverence which we free-born Britons used to feel in the presence of nobility. Certainly Graham observed the effect on me of the revelation of his position as one of the highest of our aristocracy, for with half-feigned displeasure he said, "It hurts me not a little, Watson, that even you should regard title and position as of any account. What is a duke, what is the possessor of any title but a man? It has been my ambition to live my life as a man among men, and to be judged by the same standards as they judge each other. I have found the liveliest satisfaction and the keenest enjoyment in so living, to the extent that the idea of returning to a life of artificiality and comparative uselessness fills me with repugnance. Do me the favour of banishing from your mind the knowledge of my unfortunate ancestry. Now I must go. My duty is at home, but as soon as I am free I shall be with you again. I have no time at present to discuss things with you, but I want you to take my place until I return. Look

up my poor friends in town, and see that all is going well with them." I had to break in here, "I would be delighted to do all you ask my, my——" "Graham, Allan Graham, is my name now and always," he said decisively. "I am glad of that," said I. "Well, Graham, I have to consider the demands of business, for my holiday will soon be ended."

"I have thought of that," he replied. "You have been finding your work uncongenial; resign your position at once. There is better work for you to do, and I take the responsibility of fitting you to it. Meantime, kindly take my place, and remain here as my guest until I return. Raise no objections, please," he continued, seeing I was about to speak. "My time is strictly limited, as you know, and I cannot stay to talk over my plans, but you will not regret carrying out my wishes now. Good-bye, Watson." We shook hands warmly, and he was gone, but it was some little time ere I heard the motor start on its long journey. As I turned from the window, whence I had watched the departing motor until it was lost in the traffic of Princes Street, Mrs. Smith entered the room. With shame I confess that my interest in and curiosity concerning Graham's revelation of his real personality predominated over the feeling of sympathy for my friend; at any rate it was on that impulse I spoke when I asked her if she had always known who her lodger was.

"Indeed I did not, Mr. Watson," she replied

" though I will not deny that I have been aware for a long time that he was a member of some noble family. Soon after he came here, however, he told me so much and enjoined me not to inquire into his family connections, and I have felt bound to respect his wishes, in spite of the curiosity which is said to be characteristic of my sex. It is only a minute ago that I learned from himself that he is the only son of the Duke of Allanforth." " So that——" I began. " Yes," she interrupted, correctly interpreting my thought, " if the Duke's illness should unfortunately prove fatal Mr. Graham succeeds to the dukedom."

" I will be very sorry, Mrs. Smith, when you lose your lodger and I my friend."

" I would be more than sorry, Mr. Watson; it has been a great joy to us to have Mr. Graham here, and a perfect delight to serve him, but he is coming back whatever happens; he says so, and he always does what he says."

With kindly consideration Mrs. Smith invited me to tea with her and Nellie in the kitchen, seeing Graham had gone. He had, it appears, gulped down a cup of tea hastily while giving Mrs. Smith some directions before his departure. Naturally enough, Graham was the only subject of our table talk, a conversation which increased my knowledge of his fine qualities, making him the more admirable in my estimation. I was not a little amused, however, to find the ladies quite unconcerned about Graham's being a prospective

duke. He seemed to have imbued them so thoroughly with his own spirit that the man was everything to them; his position and title nothing. I derived a secret satisfaction from this, as it enabled me to regard him in the same light, just as I felt sure he wished me to do.

A few days passed away and on New Year's morning I had sat down to breakfast in bachelor fashion with the *Scotsman* stuck up against the hot-water jug so that I might study the latest report of the Test Cricket Match in Australia, when the bell rang and Mrs. Smith handed in my scant correspondence. A black-bordered envelope with the post-mark of a Perthshire village conveyed its message before I had broken the seal. It was from Graham, saying that his dear father had passed peacefully out with the last setting of the sun of the old year. A card was also enclosed wishing me a happy and prosperous New Year, and on it the beautiful lines from Tennyson's "In Memoriam":

Ring out wild bells.

I had memorised these verses years before, but on this New Year's morning I had to read them through word by word, and finishing, said to myself: "Aye, my dear Graham, you are a duke now, but you are more than a duke, you are a man, every inch of you. And you have a sore heart, too, this morning I'll be bound. Well, God bless and comfort you as you've been a blessing and comfort to many of us. How like you, too, to make these lines of Tennyson's your New Year

message to me. Just like a bit of yourself, and I feel that I can shake hands with you in the spirit."

Taking up my newspaper again, I sought and found the obituary notice of the late Duke of Allanforth.

It stated that the deceased was in his sixty-third year, that he had been predeceased by the duchess some twenty-six years ago on the birth of their second child, a daughter, and that he had never married again. He was a man of scholarly attainments, quiet and reserved in manner, a nominal member of the Church of Scotland, and in politics a broad-minded Conservative, but taking no active interest in either religion or politics. His estate in central Scotland was an extensive one, and of considerable value, embracing, as it did, not only agricultural and pastoral land, but a large area in which coal and iron abounded. Though dignified in bearing at all times, there was nothing of haughtiness about him; on the contrary, he took a warm interest in the welfare of his tenantry, with whom, and especially those less fortunate amongst them, he came into frequent personal contact, and so endeared himself to all that his passing is viewed by them with profound regret.

He is succeeded in the title by his only son, Allan Bruce Howard Graham, born 10th December, 1881, educated at Harrow School and Oxford.

He has not so far taken a position in the public eye, and but little is known of his career, as he

lives a somewhat secluded life; but he seems to have distinguished himself more on the cricket and Rugby field and in the University Debating Society than in the class-room. There are strange rumours afloat that he possesses Socialistic tendencies, but this is so incomprehensible that they may be dismissed as preposterous.

He is still unmarried, though it is understood that about seven years ago matrimonial negotiations in which he was concerned were abruptly broken off.

Such, in brief, was the information I gleaned regarding the man whom the world now knew as the Duke of Allanforth. But the man I knew was Allan Graham; much depended upon the issue of the struggle for supremacy between the man and the duke, and fervently I hoped that the man would prevail.

During Graham's absence from Edinburgh I was not idle; the charge he had committed to me was larger in its scope than I had imagined, and in its execution I gained an insight into the lives of the city poor such as I had never dreamt of.

While making my round of calls, a pleasant little incident occurred which showed the wonderful tact and thoughtfulness of Graham in his method of rendering practical help. On my list of names was that of "Miss Macdonald, Concord House, Hermitage Avenue." I called without any clear idea of what my mission could be there, for the house was a large one, and could only be

occupied by comparatively wealthy people; but when I rang the bell and was immediately confronted by Julia Macdonald in the neat black and white dress of service, the situation became clear to me. Instantly recognising me, she smiled and blushed confusedly, then led the way into a sitting room and served me with a cup of tea. Noting my surprise, she informed me that her employers permitted her to entertain a friend occasionally in that way, and in reply to my inquiry how she came to be there, mentioned that it was through Mr. Graham, who desired her to take service for a few months, in order to learn all she could about the conduct of a household and how to cook, after which she was to be placed in a nurses' home, with a view to becoming a nurse.

I also learned from her that Graham had already taken her father in hand, and had got him into a good situation with a first-class shoe firm in town, while the place of mother had been filled by a housekeeper, a respectable widow who was practically friendless, and therefore in need of a home herself. Julia seemed thoroughly happy in her new sphere. Just as she was showing me out, her employer returned from his day's business. I had not inquired the name of the people she served; judge therefore of my surprise when I recognised in her employer the Mr. Ewen I had met a few days previously in Saunders' café. The recognition was mutual, but in order to conceal from Julia the fact of our being acquainted, he sent her with a message to Mrs. Ewen.

"Delighted to see you again, Mr. Watson," said he when she had gone. "Glad to find you looking after Graham's friends. You see, I am not supposed to know Julia's history, nor is she to know that I am a friend of Graham. He wants her to work out her own salvation, only he believes that she must have a chance, and he is quite right. She will do, Watson, she will do; it would have been a terrible pity if she had never got a chance."

I expressed my pleasure in knowing that Julia was in good hands, and declining Mr. Ewen's invitation to spend the evening there, I returned to my lodging, almost treading on the heels of Graham, who had just preceded me upstairs. I was just in time to join Mrs. Smith and Nellie in their cordial welcome and in getting him comfortably installed in his old quarters.

Our attempts to express sympathy with him in his bereavement were unavailing; whatever his feelings may have been, he masked them by a breeziness of manner, which, though obviously assumed, yet effectually prevented the pursuit of a subject he did not want to talk about, and no sooner were we by ourselves than he demanded an account of my stewardship.

Nothing less than a fully detailed account would satisfy him, and for nearly a couple of hours he followed every point of my story with close attention, interjecting a remark here and there, always sympathetic and approving, never querulous or disparaging.

CHAPTER IX.

How a Lord Became Socialist.

When I had finished, "Now, Graham," I said, "I have answered plenty of questions. It is your turn to stand examination. Here is one question you *must* answer, 'How did you, a born aristocrat, become a Socialist?' I think that you will agree that your position is somewhat anomalous, what might be called a phase of the social question."

"I do not object in the least to your question," said he. "As a matter of fact I am well aware that the British people, with their peculiar mixture of democratic independence and traditional deference to the nobility, will regard a ducal Socialist as a freak, totally unexplainable by any law of nature.

"To myself however, my conversion to Socialism does not appear at all freakish. It came about through no sudden impulse, but by a perfectly natural process. To begin with, when I tell you that Saunders was butler to my father, many things will become clear to you. Though as a youth I was keen on games and athletics, I was not callous and indifferent to the unceasing

struggle of the masses with poverty, nor blind to the bleak wretchedness of the lives of the lower grade of toilers and of the submerged. I went to Church with the family, listened to sermons from all sorts of texts, looked around for any sign of the practical application of Christ's teaching, and found next to none.

"I drove in the carriage and in the motor into the city. I saw ill-clad, ill-fed men and women emerge from slum houses; I saw poor, wee innocent children neglected, dirty, blue with cold, toddling along the wet street, and my heart bled for them. The contemplation of these things has always made and still makes me supremely unhappy, and even for my own happiness (apart altogether from securing justice for the oppressed) I have devoted my life to the study of the social question in the endeavour to solve the problem. I read all I could lay hands on dealing with the subject, and became firmly convinced that the evil lay in the existing system of capitalistic individualism, but the cure I could not find until, in course of my investigation, I approached Saunders. I had realised that the Church as an organisation failed to practise its own precepts; I knew the painful anxiety, the want and misery which millions of my fellow men and women had to endure, yet it never occurred to me to associate religion with the social problem. You will consider this strange, but I must confess that I have nothing to say for myself—it was sheer stupidity; the only explanation I can offer is that

among my own class religion was regarded as an extraneous, intangible transcendentalism, having not the slightest relation to the social condition of the people. Knowing Saunders to be a thoughtful, studious fellow, I went to him in my difficulty.

"To my surprise he went straight to the point. In a quiet, mild way he asked me, 'Do you believe in your Bible?' 'Yes,' said I, 'thoroughly.' 'I am glad of that,' said he. 'You might study for a week or two the teaching of Jesus Christ, satisfy yourself that He spoke no idle words, no vain platitudes, then apply His teaching to every circumstance and condition of individual and social life, and see where it leads you. Think the matter out for yourself, without bias and without prejudice, and let me know the result.' I have a shrewd suspicion, Watson, that he had been studying me as well as other things, for he could not have employed a more certain method of making me a Socialist. From that time we had many a talk together on the quiet, until his sad leave-taking."

"Then, Graham," I interposed, "your idea is to systematise the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount?"

"By no means," he exclaimed vehemently. "To systematise and organise is man's way, to lay down a living principle, eternal and unchangeable, is God's way:

> Our little systems have their day,
> They have their day and cease to be

"But let the 'love thy neighbour' principle be accepted and established, and the less of system we have the better.

"Of course, after arriving at definite conclusions, there were many things in my daily life with which I found myself in serious conflict. Take flunkyism, for example; you can hardly realise how utterly repugnant it was to me to have my fellow-men bowing and scraping to me, and addressing me as 'my lord.' Think of it, Watson; did the same God who made the duke make the flunky? Did He ever mean anything so absurd? Did He put the same kind of soul into both? If so why does one lord it over the other, who dare not call his soul his own? Is there a man with an immortal soul behind the big white shirt front, the swallow-tail coat, the plush breeches, the padded calves, or is it a different kind of creature from the one who orders it about? If they changed clothes which would be which? If divested of clothes, might not either be the other? And if divested of life would it make any difference if the flunky was buried in the duke's ground and the duke in the hole dug for the flunky?

"As I became emancipated from the thraldom of caste, I entered into a fuller enjoyment of life than I had ever known before, I felt there was no necessity for my being an idler and a pleasure-seeker, that there was useful work which even I might do, but as little by little I put my hand to it the inevitable happened: in my own circle

I was regarded as an amiable idiot, a young fool, a hare-brained dreamer, a traitor to my class.

"You may have wondered why I have not married. Well, one reason is that I determined that I would not have a son to succeed to an estate which I hoped might be restored to the people, for I have no shadow of doubt that to them it rightfully belongs."

CHAPTER X.

The Duke's Son Knocks Out the Squire.

"Perhaps," he continued, "I should tell you how I came to leave my home and take lodgings in this city. It was one night after dinner some half-dozen years ago. The gentlemen had adjourned to the billiard room and sat smoking and drinking, the conversation was light, and there was a good deal of chaff and banter. "I say, Hookern," said Sir George Blake to a North of England squire who was one of my father's guests, "What's this you've been doing with that poor old chap down your way. Clapped him into jail, did you? Tell us about it."

"Poor old chap! Damned old thief!" replied Hookern savagely. "I gave him a job out of sheer charity to dig potatoes, and the other day I caught him going off with his pockets bulging out with a quantity he had stolen, so I gave him in charge and he got ten days. That's all."

"No, that's not all," I broke in with indignation, and in a moment the attention of the company was rivetted upon me, to my no small confusion. "It happens that I read an account

of your blackguardly conduct in the papers. Gentlemen," I said, turning to those about me, " this is what happened. John Walker, a man of seventy years of age, was employed by Hookern here to lift potatoes and wheel them in a barrow to a barn. His generous employer caught him one day going home with six potatoes in his possession, had him apprehended, and though he had never before been in trouble, a bench of country justices, friends of Hookern's, including a vicar of the Church of England, sentenced him to ten days' imprisonment. For the lifting and storing of the potatoes Hookern paid the munificent wage of sixpence per cwt., so poor old Walker had to bend his back to about ten hours of arduous and monotonous toil to earn half-a-crown. I ask you, gentlemen, who was the thief, and what sort of justice it was that stamped as a jail-bird a worn old man who had lived out his seventy years blamelessly until that trifling incident which I refuse to consider a crime."

I am afraid that I had worked myself into a rage at Hookern, for when he sought to dismiss the subject in an off-hand way by alluding to my remarks as the ravings of a young fool, I let fly at him and sent him sprawling on the floor." " Bravo, Graham, well played," I shouted enthusiastically. " No, no, Watson," said he, " don't say that, I must not forget that it was only when he called me a fool that I knocked him down, even though my indignation had been aroused previously by his infamous treatment of the old

man. I, of course, apologised for what I had done, but I do not really regret it. In the first place, Hookern deserved what he got, he simply *had* to be knocked down; and in the second place the incident has been a lesson to me, and I am not likely to lose control of myself in that fashion again, however righteously indignant I may feel. This breach of decorum made some little trouble, but though my father reproached me for attacking a guest under his roof, and though he never allowed me to think he approved my action, I have good reason for believing he was rather proud of it than otherwise. Feeling I could no longer keep up the pretence of enjoying society life, I made arrangements for coming to reside in Edinburgh, and here I have been these six years. Don't imagine, however, that there was ever any rupture between my father and myself. The very reverse was the case, and one of my pleasantest recollections now is the month's tour on the Continent which we made *incognito* every year. In an indescribable sort of way I owe a very great deal to my father, not for any conscious purpose on his part of guiding me, but simply for what he was. The apparent serenity of his life, its self-containment combined with self-subjugation, resulted from a sense of the obligations of his position. Without ever speaking of the exalted position he occupied in British society, he seemed at all times to regulate his life in accordance with its responsibilities. Such were his qualities of heart

and mind that but for what was in a peculiar way his unfortunate environment I fully believe he would have been a Socialist.

"It is no disparagement to him to say that the difference between us is that from a sense of duty he submitted himself to the fettering conditions of social usage, while I am determined to emancipate myself from them. Well, he has had his day, and the hour is come when my principles must be put to the test." "Do you mean," I asked him, "that you are going to run your estate on Socialistic lines?" "I mean that I refuse to consider the estate as mine at all, or to run it on my own account. A great opportunity is mine, involving a great responsibility, and as I have sought to propagate my principles by simply living them, I shall hope to show the way to a happier, a saner, and a loftier social life by the example of a community established on the 'Love thy neighbour' principle.

"I have already called a meeting for to-morrow afternoon in this room, and in addition to Saunders, Ewen, Elder, Davidson, and, of course, yourself, I expect Mr. Joseph Dunn, a Labour leader in Aberdeen; Professor Wallace, late of Glasgow University, and Sir George Drummond Blake, from Perthshire, a neighbouring laird with whom I have some influence."

CHAPTER XI.

A Momentous Meeting.

Just as the mighty oak which defies the blast for hundreds of years has its origin in a small and insignificant-looking seed, so do great causes and beneficial movements frequently originate in humble, unlikely, and unheard of quarters. Who would have thought that the little reed basket floating among the bulrushes contained the great law-giver? Who would have thought that from the stable at Bethlehem and the workman's home at Nazareth would come forth One whose life, death, and teaching were to transform the world, and affect it at all points for good or ill according to the acceptance or rejection of His teaching?

Down through the centuries many other reforms based upon the teaching and example of the Nazarene have had their inception where least expected, not the least of these reforms being that wonderful social transformation which, after years of travail, came to birth at that little meeting in a private lodging in an Edinburgh tenement nearly seven years ago.

It is my good fortune to be able to give the

reader of these pages an account of what transpired at that meeting.

The company having assembled, Graham moved that Professor Wallace be appointed chairman, and that I be asked to act as secretary. Seated around the table, with the Professor at the top and Graham at the bottom, the chairman got to business at once. I need not describe the man or tell what I knew of him; his introductory speech tells all that is necessary.

"Friends," he said, "the object of our gathering here this afternoon is known to you all. This is my first opportunity of making your acquaintance personally, though I have known all of you in connection with the efforts to call into being a state based upon a high ideal which, for want of a better name, is called Socialistic. Our friend Graham alone have I had the pleasure of knowing, and indeed I believe he is the link that unites us all. As our whole discussion is dependent upon the statement Mr. Graham makes I shall call upon him to speak first, but before doing so it might be as well if I mention how I happen to be here.

"I have been a book-worm all my life, but I have had the privilege of marrying a wife from whom I have learned the truth of Pope's saying, that 'the proper study of mankind is man.'

"My studious habit, combined with the scientific turn of mind which I may reasonably claim to possess, enables me to study man in relation to his kind, free from bias and prejudice;

and it will not surprise you who sit around this table that such a study resulted in the conviction that the so-called individualistic system is absurd and chaotic—incurably so. Looking about for a better, I find none so practical and practicable as that which is called Socialism. This conclusion arrived at, my whole programme of life now is to strive for the attainment of the Socialistic ideal, and I, with you, am indebted to Graham for a unique opportunity. I now call upon him to let us have his proposals."

"These," said Graham, promptly rising to his feet, "are easily stated, but I am under no misapprehension as to the task involved in carrying them out. To regard the estate I have succeeded to as my own private possession would be to outrage my own convictions, and I ask you to relieve me of its control. I wish it to be clearly understood that the handing over of the Allanforth estate to the community is not to be spoken of as a sacrifice on my part; my position is simply this:

"One whom I acknowledge as Lord and Master, desirous of showing people the way of life, gave up *everything* for their sake, even to life itself, demonstrating how a man in losing his life truly finds it.

"Now I believe in Him, in His teaching, in His principles, and the only proof I can give of my belief is in following Him, holding nothing back.

"For the benefit of anyone here who does not understand the Christian position, I may say that

I regard the proposed Socialist state as likely to be beneficial and enduring only inasmuch as it is based upon a true and enduring principle. This I find in the injunction of Jesus that 'Ye love God, and your neighbour as yourself.' I am quite aware of the criticism levelled at Socialists that it is quite easy to theorise, but impossible to apply the theories.

"Well, the time has come when we must accept the challenge; in a business-like way we must set about the formation of a community in which 'Love thy neighbour' shall be the guiding principle.

"I am confident that the operation of this principle in social intercourse under suitable conditions will be easier and more natural than life under the present beggar-my-neighbour system. The difficulties we have to face are initial; it is in the transition process that our task lies, and it calls for the exercise of wisdom, skill, tact, and patience. I have therefore called you together, to take action forthwith as an executive committee to establish on the estate of Allanforth a Socialistic community wherein the private possession of the land, of capital, and of the means of production shall be unknown. Let the 'Love thy neighbour' principle be applied with fearless logic, and hardship and injustice will result to no one.

I account it a great privilege to be associated with you in this effort for social regeneration; I may not boast of anything I can do, but at the

end of the day I hope it may truly be said that I did what I could. To our great cause I give everything, and I give myself."

Though we had already been prepared for Graham's great act of renunciation, as it was called in those days, we were all deeply moved at the actual moment of its accomplishment, and each one seemed suddenly burdened with the weight of a heavy responsibility.

There was subdued applause as Graham resumed his seat, and Mr. Elder rising, gave expression to our feelings when he said, "I know that our friend Graham desires neither thanks nor commendation for what he has done, but that fact in no way detracts from the magnificence of his action, and as the greatest works accomplished in the uplifting of mankind have always been founded on deeds of renunciation, it augurs well for the success of our cause that he has set such a splendid example. But it is only an example; it remains for us to emulate it, and for my part I leave all and follow Graham. It is but little I can bring of material goods, but, as member of the School Board and Town Council, I have gained some experience of the administration of public affairs, and that experience and knowledge I place unreservedly at the service of the new State."

The next speaker was Mr. Dunn, the Labour leader from Aberdeen, and a recognised authority on most matters relating to the social problem. In appearance he was more professor-like than

the professor; by no means good-looking, there was yet the stamp of distinction on that strong-featured bare face, from which a pair of large dark eyes seemed simply to blaze through his spectacles, while a thick mass of black hair crowned a figure such as is seldom seen. His voice was of extraordinary depth and power, and the vigour, the directness, and the earnestness of his speech would have commanded attention in an audience of five thousand. "I am glad, Mr. Chairman," he said, "that Graham has brought us straight to the difficulties that will confront us during the transition from the present to the future state. These difficulties exist, they must be faced, and they must be overcome. Since hearing from Graham I have given the matter some consideration, and the conclusion I arrived at is that our first step must be the foundation of a small community on part of the estate of Allanforth.

"I presume all of us are ready to go, and there should be no difficulty in getting a few hundreds of convinced Socialists to join with us in the enterprise. My belief is that our influence would extend as the advantages of a Socialistic State in being became increasingly apparent; that in time, starting only as a leavening force, we could go on to absorb district after district into our community, until the Government would have to take us seriously, and would be obliged to regard our principle as something more than the idle dream they now think it to be.

"I foresee trouble arising through the opposition of people presently settled on Allanforth estate, many of whom will, from want of knowledge and consequent prejudice, look askance upon the Socialist movement. To meet such trouble as it arises we ought to have a lawyer to advise, so that all our operations may be characterised not only by justice, but by conformity to the law of the land. Naturally, there are not many Socialistic lawyers, but I do know one whose services we may count upon. I would also suggest that at the very outset we shall enlist a doctor in our service. I happen to know that Dr. Saltman, of London, the famous Socialist doctor, is at the point of a breakdown in health, caused by overwork in his zealous efforts for the welfare of the poor, and that a change of scene for a prolonged period is imperative. He is certain to accept an invitation to join us. There are many other details which we must discuss, but these may be touched on by following speakers, so I will sit down."

Sir George Blake had been fidgeting during Dunn's speech, as if he had something to say and was not sure if he could trust himself on his feet, but this was settled for him by the professor calling upon him. Springing to his feet he stood with soldierly erectness, glared each one of us out of countenance in turn, then feeling more composed he stood at ease and jerked out his speech in spasmodic phrases. "Mr. Chairman and—er—gentlemen, this is the first time I have

—er—got up on my hind legs to speak in—er er—company, since I was in the Guards. Perhaps some of you who know me will—er—wonder what the devil I am doing here. A fortnight ago I would have wondered too.

"But it was Graham here who did it. Right good fellow, Graham. Not a word, sir, not a word. Chip of the old block. I knew his father well, God bless him.

"I never thought much about these—er—Socialist Johnnies until Graham tackled me. Rather upset my apple-cart. Quite true though, quite true, every word he said. Church no damned use, yet should be, for life's not worth living without religion you know. I've been a church-goer all my life, but never seemed to get anywhere until Graham showed me the whole thing in plain English in the Book itself. Don't know how I missed it. 'Love God, love thy neighbour,' that's it; our blessed Lord meant us to *do*, and I've always believed in doing it, but didn't know how until Graham showed me it is our rotten cash notions that prevent. Dug the filthy thing up by the root, showed decay from root upwards. Done me a great service, Mr. Graham; showed me how to live my life in a healthy, useful way, instead of being an item of a rotten society. Wonderful fellow is Graham. I congratulate you—er—gentlemen, that you have the—er—privilege of his—er—acquaintance. Generous to other folks, honest to his own convictions. 'An honest man's the noblest work of

God,' as somebody said—that chap Burns, I believe. Very well said—for him. Saunders, too, another good man; glad to see you here to-day, sir, how d'ye do? Since that terrible accident I have sorrowed with you all these years, as I am sure you sorrow with me now that my only boy is gone. Had I not known how you bore your grief I had never been able to say as I do now, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.' And so, Mr. Chairman, I look forward with pleasure to taking a hand in the great work that is afoot. Very nearly a bull, Graham, eh?

"After the splendid example of our friend, the best I can do is to follow it.

"My little bit of land is not of much account, about enough to hang out my washing on, but it is going into the common stock with Graham's, and the house I should wish to see, in memory of my dear dead wife and boy, converted into a hospital or sanatorium. I should like to do something myself by way of active service you know, but I am getting an old duffer now. How would it do if I took in hand the organisation of a defence force, and superintended the drilling of the youngsters?

"I am all for peace myself nowadays, but I believe in being trained to self-defence. Do you agree with that position?"

The question was addressed to Dunn, who replied, "Yes, sir, I do. I hate war and will do

my utmost to prevent strife; but while the world is as it is, my principle is to make life worth living for every man in the state, then compel him to take his share in all the responsibilities of citizenship, including defence, or clear out."

"Hear, hear," said Sir George, sitting down abruptly. To say that this speech made a profound impression would be an exaggeration, but it was intensely human, and as showing that Sir George's heart was in the right place it was not the least valuable contribution to the discussion.

He was followed by Mr. Davidson, the retired schoolmaster, whose insignificant figure and voluble utterance were in marked contrast to those of the previous speaker. He devoted his remarks almost entirely to the educational requirements of the new State, explaining his scheme in very full detail, and offering the remaining years of his life to the service of the Socialistic community in its educational department. In the course of his speech the first jarring note was struck, though neither heat nor friction arose in consequence. "It is probably owing to some mental or moral defect in my character," said he, "that I am unable to justify my position as a Socialist on the same grounds as the friends who have already spoken. I am not altogether ignorant concerning the so-called Christian religion; I have read the Bible straight through, and in my youth was a regular Churchgoer, but have never found religious people to be more brotherly than the irreligious, nor to be

actuated in all their conduct by any higher motive than self-interest."

"Much learning hath made thee" broke in Ewen.

"Sad," interrupted Graham. "He that is not against us is with us. I prefer Davidson's irreligion to the parody of religion in vogue in the Church to-day."

"I have got on tolerably well without religion for nearly thirty years," continued Davidson; "but as I threw religion overboard because nobody seemed to have much use for it, I am prepared to reconsider the matter in view of your statements that in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ you find the key to social justice and equity. Up to the present, however, I base my Socialism on the broad ground of common humanity. Socialism to me stands for mutual interest in place of self-interest. I regard monopoly in riches as bad for the possessor and bad for the dispossessed. Riches is a relative term. Were all rich, then nobody would be rich; and on the other hand, were there no poor, then there were none rich. But as the ambition to acquire riches involves indifference to the consequent poverty of others, it is evident that the standard of riches is a false one, and makes for social disease, disorder, and justifiable discontent. I am at one with you Christians in the belief that a system which is fundamentally wrong must pass away, giving place to one established on the enduring principle of brotherly love and mutual

interest, and I rejoice that I have been permitted to see at least the dawn of that new era. While listening to the suggestions regarding the provision of legal, medical, and educational needs of the new community, it occurred to me that the first requirement is the provision of the necessaries of life, namely food of all sorts, clothing, etc., and that we have in the person of our friend Ewen the very man to organise and supervise that department of public service. I quite understand he may have some difficulty in drawing out from his business advantageously, but perhaps he will consider the advisability of floating his business, so that it might go on in his absence while he still retained his interest in it."

"I am obliged to friend Davidson for his practical suggestion," Ewen responded, "but I can assure him I have already given the matter serious consideration; and although at one time I entertained the idea he has propounded, our meeting to-day has cleared my mind of all doubt as to my line of action. You one and all are prepared to cut adrift from the existing system, and to devote yourselves wholly to the advancement of the new State, carrying out its principles to their logical conclusion.

"I, too, see this to be my duty, for the success of our cause depends in no small measure upon the number of people who cease to strive for lucre to themselves under the existing system, and throw in their lot with ours for the benefit of the community.

"I shall sell all I have forthwith, and place myself and all I possess at the service of the new State.

"The organisation and supervision of the food supply and so forth will be a thoroughly congenial task to me, and one for which I may claim to possess some qualifications, but whereas I have hitherto acted simply as a buyer and seller, my work under the new conditions will be directed to distribution only until such time as by a gradual process we become producers ourselves of those commodities we are capable of producing for our own needs.

"This leads me to the consideration of another branch of the State service in which our friend Watson will be interested.

"It will take a considerable time to bring our principles into full operation on the estate of Allanforth, and assuming that we will be successful (as we have a right to expect) I estimate that it will be upwards of seven years ere we can truly be said to possess the land. But in the meantime we have to prepare for all contingencies, and I foresee that two years hence we shall require an agent to travel every country in the world to act as buyer and seller for us, chiefly the former. I have been informed by Graham that you, Mr. Watson, are the one man amongst us with the special training, experience, and aptitude which would make this work congenial to you, and it is proposed that you be offered a seven years' engagement from now, the first twelve or

eighteen months of which you would spend in this country acquiring further knowledge of and insight into the working of export and import trade. To this end we will get you placed with a firm in London doing a large foreign trade, and your experience there will be of the utmost value to you when you go abroad. I do not suppose you possess linguistic attainments, but you will have an excellent opportunity of picking up colloquial French and German in London during your stay there, an accomplishment worth having, and which would be further improved in the course of your travels. Though you would be primarily an ambassador of commerce, you would also be incidentally the ambassador from our Socialist community to the brotherhood in other lands, and in that capacity help to promote that fraternal feeling between people which makes for peace and mutual esteem.

"This responsible position calls for sacrifice; for example, marriage is practically out of the question until the expiry of your engagement; but by way of compensation, it seems probable that you may look forward to a well-earned rest, and to being comfortably settled at Allanforth on your return.

"I trust that you will consider our proposal seriously, and that you may see your way to accept the post."

"Gentlemen," I said, springing to my feet in an ecstacy of enthusiasm, "the man who has been face to face with the present hideous con-

ditions of commercial life has no need to consider his acceptance of such an offer as this. Each one of you here seems to be well adapted to the work you are undertaking, and I am in equally fortunate case, as I feel that the sphere I have simply yearned for, that in which I can perform a useful and necessary work, has been opened up to me. I shall do my level best in it regardless of wage; it will be sufficient reward to know that my efforts are successful, and helpful to the cause you are all so deeply interested in."

Rather egotistic of me you will think, dear reader, to write down such heroics. Not at all; how could I or any one else help being infected by the lofty and generous spirit of the whole company? Saunders had listened with keen interest, but did not speak a word. Yet his very silence was eloquent, I read his thoughts in his eyes. They seemed to say, "I agree with all that has been said; I go to Allanforth—to work."

CHAPTER XII.

Mammon Dethroned.

Far into the night we sat, Graham and I.

The company had departed, but only after spending several hours in the consideration of innumerable details connected with the projected enterprise. We lay back in our arm-chairs smoking and ruminating, breaking silence but seldom. Both of us seemed to feel that the occasion was one for calm reflection; certainly there was ample food for thought. Events had moved rapidly during these three weeks, and now on the threshold of a career pregnant with vast yet unknown potentialities, to take a retrospect of these events was fitting and natural. Where did they all begin? Surely, —— surely it was with Christmas Eve and Julia Macdonald. Strange that ever since that night the poor girl should be mixed up in all that concerned me.

Strange that ever since in all I did I should carry with me a consciousness of her presence, and that in every thought and action I should instinctively desire that they should be such as she would approve. Could it be possible? Was this love? Well, it won't do, Watson, my boy!

You have your work cut out for you, seven years of it.

"I say, Graham," said I at last, banishing the pleasantly-disturbing thought, "what do you think of the prospects of success at Allanforth?"

For quite a time he made no reply, but drew vigorously at his pipe and watched the cloud of smoke ascending, then he spoke. "Down through the ages great things have been accomplished from time to time by one man and God; there is but a small company of us setting out upon this enterprise, but we can do all things through Him who strengtheneth us. If the work upon which we are engaged is of God it shall prosper and it shall endure. Are you persuaded in your own mind that it is in harmony with what you know of the Divine will?"

"I am."

"And I am. Therefore we turn not to the right hand or to the left, but go straight forward, with courage and with hope."

Again we lapsed into silence, and my thoughts took flight into distant realms, this time of the future.

Truth to tell, my silence was that of speechlessness, for the contemplation of the amazing turn in my fortunes robbed me of the power of articulation.

For a moment a pang of regret seized me when I realised that I would have no hand in the pioneer work at Allanforth, and my imagination ran riot in the thought of the stirring events which must

precede the establishment of the new State, but on further reflection I was satisfied that the task allotted me would call for the exercise of the highest powers of which I was capable.

Rousing myself from my reverie, I asked Graham what was the nature of the initial steps he proposed to take.

"The phrasing of your question suggests my answer," said he. "We go by steps. Our first step is to plant our colony on that part of Allanforth estate which is not occupied by tenants or feuars, the parks, home farm, and of course, the house itself. Blake's place is also available for immediate occupancy, so there is already ample accommodation for the two or three hundred of our friends who are prepared to settle there during the next few weeks. I can't tell you how delighted and encouraged I feel at the large-hearted enthusiasm evinced by Blake over this matter; this idea of his for turning Mountfort House into a hospital or sanatorium is a splendid one. The situation of Mountfort is ideal for all purposes. It stands high up on a fir and larch-clad hillside, with a southern prospect, and being less than two miles distant from Allanforth Castle, as it was called until lately, we shall establish telephonic communication immediately.

"The house at Allanforth will, during the first year or two, be used for boarding new arrivals temporarily, and will be under the charge of Saunders. You see it will not be possible to house all the extra population just at once, the building

of houses will take time, for we intend to build on a plan, and therefore must not be rushed. I gave my late father's servants the chance of staying on the clear understanding that the old order had passed away, but to my relief not one of the male servants, and only a few of the female, would agree to the new conditions. This was just as I expected and almost wished, for it would take a considerable time to make useful citizens of men who had been trained to servility. The estate factor also is going. He is a comparatively old man and will not attempt to accommodate himself to my new fangled notions as he calls them. But we have the rare good fortune to have the land steward with us. He is a typical Scottish agriculturist and has risen from the ranks by sheer merit and determination. He has strongly advocated co-operative farming for a long time, and had I taken up my inheritance I would certainly have encouraged him to develop the system to the utmost among the Allanforth tenantry.

"Sandy—his name is Alexander McPherson, but he is best known as Sandy—was an easy convert to Socialism. 'He had nae time,' he said, 'tae study politics, but he aye thocht there was ower muckle machinery at wark for a' it turned oot,' and when I told him that Socialism was little more than the application of his co-operative system all round he was 'setisfeed there maun be something intult.' With the arrival of the men who took part in our meeting

this afternoon, men of marked ability and upright character, the formless and nebulous will take shape and substance, and the first step will be successfully accomplished.

"There being ample resources at our command, plans will be matured for each succeeding step, our great concern being not to revolutionise but to transform by peaceful and natural methods which will entail no hardship upon the individual. Our belief is that the testimony of our own example will be sufficient to induce many, especially the weary and heavy laden, to join our society. We are well aware that we shall be attacked by those who think their interests are being menaced, and that attempts will be made to destroy our community, but even in combating such hostility we shall avoid using the weapons of our enemies. Every circumstance will be dealt with as it arises, but we are determined to demonstrate the value of the 'Love thy neighbour' principle under all circumstances, and that it must prevail by its inherent rightness."

Satisfied that our great cause was safe in the hands of such capable and devoted men, I bade Graham good-night and retired.

A week later I bade good-bye to my Edinburgh friends and started on my duties with the London firm, but as this is neither an autobiography nor a book of travel, I will not impose upon the reader an account of my experiences in London and abroad.

During the first two years my work was by no means light, and I found it the more arduous because I was unfamiliar with it, while most of my spare time was absorbed in the study of languages, my sole relaxation consisting of an occasional visit to a Socialist Club, where discussions and lectures alternated with musical and whist evenings.

Graham kept me informed of the progress of affairs at Allanforth, but it was necessarily slow and uneventful. While the scheme was in its infancy the Press of the country took no notice of it, and it was only when its operations became more widely extended that the newspaper men gave Allanforth serious attention.

My preparatory work in London finished, I returned to Scotland at the expiry of the two years' engagement, and spent a few months at Allanforth before going abroad.

As a matter of course, I made my residence at the old castle in company with Graham and many others who were waiting the erection of permanent habitations, and thanks to the ministration of Saunders, whose chief assistants were Mrs. Smith, Nellie, and Julia Macdonald, my stay was rendered a very happy one indeed.

Under Graham's guidance I made a tour of the field of operations, which at that time covered an area of about two miles square, and was populated by over a thousand souls. Very little had been done in the way of erecting new buildings, Graham explaining that the intention was

to carry out their plans on a large scale, ultimately embracing the whole estate, and that their newest important recruit was a leading Glasgow architect and surveyor who was throwing himself with great zeal into the preparation of a gigantic scheme for the remodelling of practically all the properties on the estate, no small task, seeing the estate measured roughly sixteen miles by nine miles. During these first years, therefore, the already existing buildings had been utilised as far as possible, while temporary erections of wood had been put up for workshops.

Thus it was that in one of the parks, quite near the castle, I found a very hive of industry; right round it in circular form stood a tailors' workroom, grocery and provision store, butcher's shop, shoemakers' workshop, milkshop, and others. The centre was laid out as a garden, intersected by paths with seats here and there. The whole of these distributive agencies were under the control of Mr. Ewen, whose management was all that could be desired.

Some distance off, in a glade of the forest, I came upon a hive of industry of another kind, the purely productive. Here was a blacksmith's workshop and foundry adjoining, a mason's yard, saw-mill, joiners' and cabinetmakers' workshops, behind which was a huge corrugated iron structure.

The workers, numbering about a hundred, under the direction of Mr. Dunn, were all busily

engaged, but the only visible product of their labour was a great stack of planks and an enormous quantity of dressed stones.

"What is that iron building for?" I asked Graham.

"Come and see," he replied, and asked Dunn to bring the key.

On entering I found the ground floor stored with ranges, grates, and piles of fenders and fire-irons, while the upper floor contained doors and window frames at one end, and at the other furniture ready for upholstering, piled up to the ceiling. I attempted to disguise my surprise by a feeble little joke. "Getting married, Graham?" I inquired with assumed seriousness; "getting a few sticks together to furnish the cottage?"

"Not quite," said he. "I am wedded to a task that will interest me a great deal more than matrimony for some years to come. No, what you see around you is our little secret. We are much further forward than the outside world dreams of. They speak of us as dreamers, and perhaps we are, but our dreams are materialising, and on the expiry of certain leases in May, that is in three or four months hence, we shall begin the great advance in our campaign which shall not halt until New Allanforth is firmly established."

"Have your experiences then, during these two years," I asked him, "confirmed your hopes?"

"Entirely," he replied. "And now hope gives place to assurance. In the first place, we have

demonstrated Socialism to be economically sound. We supply commodities to our community at an average cost of thirty per cent. less than under the old system. And not only so, but the conditions of living, imperfect as they still are, are infinitely better than in other parts of the country, as is proved by the figures of the health returns. Which reminds me that we have only one of our people presently under treatment at Mountfort, though of course he is not the only patient there. Dr. Saltman insists upon utilising the place to the utmost, and he is never without a goodly number of patients from the surrounding district. Incidentally, this is very good business for our cause, as most of the patients and many of their friends become ardent believers in our principle. You see, Watson," he added with a smile, "medical missions are always most effective among the heathen. But if our experiment has been justified in its economic aspect, on the ethical the success is even more pronounced.

"Drunkenness and gambling are unknown among us. But, after all, is it not perfectly obvious that where our principle is applied, there have we the natural field for the exercise of the virtues and the graces? The uprooting of the sordid money incentive idea, which is inseparable from capitalistic individualism, has simultaneously destroyed other noxious weeds, such as gambling, lying advertisements, and stealing in its various forms, legal and otherwise. Jealousy and covetousness get a poor show with us, while,

on the other hand, the ' in honour preferring one another ' idea has at least a look in; and I never noticed *that* particularly under the old system.

" It seems almost impossible to enumerate the material advantages resulting from the application of our principle. For example, we have no unemployment problem, nor does suffering ensue upon displacement of labour. It pays us to take a man from a job that does not need him, and put him to other necessary work, even though he is less expert at it.

" Then of course under conditions such as prevail here, where every worker in the community is assured of a decent living, no man is inclined to rebel against being put to any honest work that is for the good of the community, as he knows that he shares in the benefit. No matter who seeks admission to our community, we can take him, be he artist or artisan, school teacher or scavenger, literary man or labourer; for fifty hours' work per week he will be put on an equal footing with us all."

" What is the nature of your financial arrangements?" I asked. " Do you use money at all?"

"' Not as currency," he replied. " At present all the assets of New Allanforth, cash, land, buildings, means of production, are held by ten trustees, all of whom you know, on behalf of the whole community. Each individual is entitled to a decent living, and gets it; and in the event of any member leaving, the trustees consider the case on its merits, and make a grant of money,

the amount being arrived at by the consideration of the value of our total assets, the size of our population, and the length of service rendered to the state by the party leaving. Here is another fact that will interest you.

"There are women without husbands and without parents, there are orphan children, there are maimed men and blind men, and all these are provided for. We have a Domestic Committee, consisting of two women and two men, with one of our trustees always acting as president, and their duties are to find suitable homes for the orphans with married people who will be father and mother to them, to bring the single women together in congenial company to live as in their own homes, to find homes for the maimed and blind, and to furnish the women and men with work in their own homes, such as knitting, sewing, laundrying, and basket-making. Under the old system these folks were victimised by sweaters; under ours their lives are rendered tolerably happy, and they become useful citizens.

"By such sane methods, we find no use for poor-houses, and it is equally certain that when our operations are extended we shall have but little use for asylums, and still less for police and prisons.

"This improvement in social conditions spells economy in the government and administration of the State. I must tell you also about education. We have about two hundred children attending school, with Professor Wallace and Mr. Davidson

in charge, and only recently we appointed four lady teachers out of scores who volunteered. Indeed, the Socialistic movement is so well supported by the teaching profession that we can staff any number of schools which may be required.

"Both Wallace and Davidson are imbued with Ruskin's idea of education—that its object should not be to cram the heads of children with what is called knowledge, but primarily to train them to be honourable and gentle men and women, useful citizens, and to instruct them in the particular kind of knowledge, including technical, suitable to the capacity and the aptitude of each child.

"Naturally, our friends not infrequently find themselves in conflict with the Government Educational Department, but the other trustees restrain them from openly flouting its officers, for we hold that the law must be obeyed in a constitutionally-governed country where a democratic franchise obtains. We may object to certain laws, but the remedy is to educate and persuade the electors to alter the laws, not to break them.

"The conditions prevailing here are peculiarly favourable to the carrying out of Davidson's educational ideal, and it is intensely interesting to observe the wonderful progress he is making by his own methods with the youngsters. Neither is their physical development being neglected; good old Blake takes his self-appointed task very seriously, and really does a lot of good among the

children and youth of both sexes. He is greatly beloved by all, in spite of his terrific sternness when ordering them about.

"Not much consideration has yet been given to organised recreation, we have had so much to do with the first essentials; but already we have several football teams, and have appointed a groundsman to lay out a tennis court and a good pitch for the cricket club that has just been formed. When the weather is good we have open-air vocal and orchestral music, and the effect out here with Nature is so enchanting that there has been no hurry to erect a concert-room, which is just as well, as we prefer to deal with it in our larger plan." This comprehensive account of the work already accomplished at New Allanforth was supported by tangible evidence, for our conversation took place while we strolled from point to point of the little colony, meeting and chatting with the very people whose condition Graham was describing, and my observation was that prosperous contentment seemed to reign over all.

It was early in February, the sun had sunk far into the south-west, and the fast approaching cloak of darkness suggested that it was time to go within.

Mrs. Smith and Saunders were ready for our coming, and in a few minutes we all sat down to tea, for Graham had insisted that Mrs. Smith and Nellie, Julia Macdonald, and Saunders should join us. It was quite a delightful reunion. Sitting next to Mrs. Smith, I casually asked her

how she enjoyed living at Allanforth. "Oh, Mr. Watson," she replied, "this is the life indeed, this is life more abundantly. It was a condition of life such as this that the Master must have foreseen when He said, 'Take no thought of the morrow,' 'Consider the lilies of the field how they grow.' And how lovely it is to think that there is a still greater abundance in store. I feel assured that the work of our leaders is the work of men inspired by the highest ideals, and that its completion will be like the answer to our Lord's prayer, 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth.'"

While giving expression to this beautiful tribute, Mrs. Smith seemed herself to be inspired, her face glowing with divine energy. I acquiesced in it all most heartily. We did not linger long at the table; as soon as the meal was over, the ladies and Saunders asked to be excused, as they had a whole host of hungry folk to feed. Graham and I moved off to the men's room, and set our pipes agoing. "Well, Graham," I said, "when do I commence my mission abroad, and what are the commissions with which I am to be entrusted?"

"We were discussing you last night," said he, "and decided that you need not go for eight or nine months yet, during which time you will render the community an important service. I suppose you could set up a Boot Factory, arrange its equipment, and gather together a staff?"

"You find the money, and I'll find the factory," I replied.

"That's settled then," he said; "now I'll tell you something. The whole course of the river as it passes through Allanforth has been surveyed, and it has been determined to build our factories on its banks as near one another as is convenient, with a view to the economical utilisation of driving power, which will be electric, and of course electric light will be the illuminant.

"Plans are being perfected for the building of a paper-mill, tannery, jute mill, rope and twine works, printing establishment, and the trustees desire you to set up a Boot Factory.

"There are other works already existing which will come into our hands in due course. Your first duty will be to visit the ground with our architect and surveyor, inform him of your requirements, and take his advice as to building site.

"He will then be guided by you in the drawing of his plans, and I should mention that he is to plan for the present so as to make extension in the future easy. How much money do you think will be required to put up and equip a factory to supply about a hundred thousand people—men, women, and children, and how many workers would be employed?"

After a little reflection, I said it would take, roughly, ten thousand pounds, and, with the most modern machinery, would give employment to about three hundred and fifty workers. "But," I added, "the variety of boots, shoes, and slippers is very great, and merchants can always buy more

cheaply from manufacturers who specialise in one class of goods."

"The gospel of cheapness does not interest us greatly," Graham replied a trifle scornfully. "Our first concern, commercially, is that our own workers should be well employed on the production of goods for our own consumption; any surplus production is profit to the State. To take in goods from abroad simply because they are five or ten per cent. cheaper means displacement of labour among our own people, and displaced labour is like water, always seeking its own level, lower and lower, until it finds an outlet in the production of equally cheap goods in payment of those sent by the foreigner.

"That sort of game may appeal to the Free Trade theorist, whose golden text is 'Buy in the cheapest market,' but it has absolutely no place in our political economy. Therefore boots, shoes, and slippers that *can* be made in Britain, *will* be made at Allanforth."

"Them's my sentiments," said I; "I'm glad you don't make cheapness a primary consideration, for I should prefer to be associated with the production of honest and creditable goods." "That's just what we want," said Graham. "Now, I take it you will want at least eight or nine months to get everything in good working order. You will have the purchase and laying down of machinery, the buying of leather, the preparation of patterns and designs, and the gathering together of the workers to look after."

I asked him if it was intended to engage union or non-union men. "That is of no consequence," said he, "the advantages of membership of our community are infinitely greater than those of any Trade Union. But we would like you to go round the various centres of the boot industry and select workers who are more or less in sympathy with our movement."

Thus it was that I found my hands full during the greater part of the year 1914; and not being hampered by scarcity of money, the work went smoothly forward to a successful issue, and the end of October found us turning out all the foot wear required for our rapidly-increasing population. Meanwhile, other branches of industry had kept pace with mine, and when the time came that I should leave these shores, my feeling of regret at parting from that devoted band of men and women who had become so dear to me was mingled with that of profound satisfaction at the realisation of an ideal hitherto believed to be impossible of attainment.

CHAPTER XIII.

The "Love Thy Neighbour" Principle Materialises.

Four years seems a very long time looking forward, but looking backward it seems a very short time indeed, and so it appeared to me that afternoon in September, 1918, when I stepped ashore at Southampton, after four years of travel in both hemispheres.

The sights, the incidents, the adventures, the work had been full of interest while I was in the experience of them, but since I set out on the homeward voyage I had felt world-weary, travel-weary; I yearned for home, I longed for rest. The moment I touched British soil, jubilant elation dispelled every other feeling, for was not I about to enter a realm approximating that lost by the first Adam, regained by the Second? This was no vague hope, but a confident expectation, based upon what I had seen accomplished, and on the information communicated by Graham from time to time. A few extracts from these letters which I have preserved, and will treasure in memory of my departed friend, will prepare the reader of these pages for the state of things

I found on returning to New Allanforth after my prolonged absence.

One of his earliest letters referred to the method of extension.

"It is rather singular," he writes, "that we have been able to make such rapid progress with so little disturbance, a fact which must be attributed to the inherent and apparent advantage of our system. I had been prepared for a sharp conflict of interest between the old order and the new, but as the public realise that our policy is a constructive one, and only destructive incidentally, they come to regard the principle upon which our system is founded as the fittest to survive.

Quite evidently the time is ripe for the establishment of Socialism. The extension of our sphere of influence is by a constant process of absorption which operates in a perfectly natural way. At every forward step we take a certain number of people refuse to join us, while others who think their interests are assailed make futile efforts to oppose us, but the result is always the same; they find it impossible to do a paying business in a community the major portion of which practises the Socialistic doctrine. Of course they are free to leave, or stay as members of our community, and in the latter case we make it as easy for them as possible.

If it is a shopkeeper who elects to stay we take over his business, assets and liabilities, except where we find a state of affairs discreditable to

the debtor or on the part of his creditors, in which case we insist upon a settlement between themselves before we step in. It is a striking commentary upon the condition of the distributive business of the country, that five-sixths of the merchants whom we approached readily accepted our terms and joined our community.

The remaining sixth have sought fresh fields and pastures new, all except one individual who is determined to fight us.

This man, Jamieson by name, has made lots of money in business and by speculation; he has wielded a great influence in the county and has made unscrupulous use of his position to his own profit, and though a notorious libertine, he occupies a position in local society and in the church which he holds by the power of his money and unlimited effrontery.

So accustomed has he been to having his own way that he cannot brook the idea of being thwarted by a gang of Socialists, and now he actually measures himself against us in a fight. Of course we do not fight, we simply hold on our way, and in the ordinary course of events his business will be paralysed, his properties rendered valueless, and if he persists long enough he is doomed. Disagreeable though the task was (for a man of his type is impossible in a Socialistic community), I called upon him on behalf of the trustees of New Allanforth to warn him of the consequences of his action and to offer him terms, but like Pharoah, he had hardened his heart

and contemptuously refused to negotiate with us." . . .

In a later letter he referred to an organised effort by certain financiers to destroy the work at Allanforth. "They have taken a three years' lease of a number of shops, and make no secret of their willingness to lose money for a considerable time in their determination to undersell us. You know our principle is 'Love thy neighbour.' Well, I think we will just about love those neighbours out of existence, kill them with kindness; isn't that the expression? They went into the business on rather a big scale, and compelled us to take them seriously. You must bear in mind that besides supplying our own people with goods of our own production, we were selling the surplus to the outside public, and giving exceptional value too; but these philanthropic financiers deliberately cut prices below cost of production.

Our trustees took counsel together and adopted a plan of campaign; we curtailed our retailing business, resting on our oars until the propitious moment arrived for resuming operations, but there has been no slackening in the productive department, and by next mail you will have instructions to sell for us on a larger scale in some lines. In each district where these philanthropists opened a shop we are paying our workpeople in cash, and instructing them to buy at these shops so long as they sell at a loss, (good old 'buy in the cheapest market' principle). Already there are signs of

rising prices; they seem to think we are reduced to impotence, but the moment their prices reach a paying level they will have a rude awakening. An interesting economic fact has been revealed by this incident; our philanthropic friends lost thousands of pounds sterling, *and we gained nothing by their loss*, for we were as well off before they came. The only gain we stand to make is when we absorb them, as we shall certainly do sooner or later; we will do so on our own terms, for we do not feel in honour bound to be so generous as we have been with others who have been displaced in the course of our advance."

It was only six months later that Graham informed me of the collapse of the opposition, which had lasted about eighteen months altogether.

A subsequent letter which I received towards the end of 1917 tells of the complete establishment of the Socialist *regime* at Allanforth.

"For a time," wrote Graham, "it seemed as if we made haste slowly, the visible results appeared so insignificant to outsiders, yet that was all in the plan; we did not attempt to force the growth artificially, but we prepared the soil, we planted the seed, we watered and tended the sapling, and to-day a large community shelters under the spreading branches of a tree deep-rooted in the noblest instincts of humanity.

"When you come amongst us again you will find a great change; the Arcadian idyll of three

years ago has given place to a very live community in which all social problems are met and dealt with. One of these problems is the treatment of the unskilled labourer, the submerged tenth, the wastrel. It is agreed that a State is poorer or richer in the proportion in which that class is numerous or scarce. Obviously, it was to the advantage of the State to find suitable work for these people and to educate them, not so much by way of cramming book knowledge into them as by teaching them how to live as upright men, social beings, not isolated and forgotten atoms. I should mention that the trustees decided about a couple of years ago that a motor road be laid through the whole sixteen miles length of Allanforth, and since that time two big jobs have been going on simultaneously, the building of the road, and the erection of works for the building of electric motor cars. We are using electricity on a great scale, both for lighting and driving; and by the time the road is made we shall have forty cars ready for passenger and goods traffic. We are laying the road by the dearest process possible, knowing that it will be the cheapest ultimately. A foundation solid as rock was first put down, and built upon it are four rows, each two feet broad, of granite setts, dressed so as to cause the least wear on the rubber tyres, the spaces between the rows being filled in with cement. Our good friend Dunn takes charge of the work, and has made a splendid selection of foremen, a very important matter in

view of the nondescript character of his labourers, for it has been agreed by way of experiment to employ every man who applied, so far as there was work for him.

"We have had some four hundred of these poor fellows through our hands; some have slipped from us and are drifting away downstream, but others, thank God, have recovered their lost manhood, and are now useful citizens.

"But the best of them will probably never realise how much they owe to the tireless efforts of Wallace, Saunders, Blake, as well as Mrs. Smith and Julia Macdonald. I alone know what it has cost these good friends of ours to entertain the labourers in every leisure moment, so that they might be weaned from the things that appeal to depraved tastes.

"To be quite candid, however, I must not allow you to suppose that education and wholesome recreation are solely or even chiefly responsible for the uplifting of the submerged; my observation is that the most beneficial results are most apparent in those who have adopted the religion of Jesus Christ, though very evidently they are helped and strengthened by the witness of the Christ-like lives of the friends whom I have mentioned. Invariably the attraction to Christ has been through His living epistles, then follows the teaching of the Scripture to feed those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. The intimate study of this problem has demonstrated to me at least the essential need of nothing short

of a regenerating power to raise the fallen and to enable them to *stand.*"

In a postcript to this letter Graham mentioned in quite a casual way that there had been a double wedding at Allanforth; Saunders had married Mrs. Smith, and he had married Nellie about a fortnight previously!

CHAPTER XIV.

New Allanforth: A Socialist State in Being.

Prepared as I was by Graham's correspondence for a great change in the life at New Allanforth, the transformation I witnessed on my arrival surpassed my highest expectations. Day was declining when I left the train at Stirling, and after less than half-an-hour's run in the motor car which Graham had thoughtfully sent to meet me, I came to the great new motor road, two-thirds of which I had to travel to reach my destination.

At the beginning of the road I found a large number of men, clean, well-dressed, and wearing white collars, just like the crowds I used to see attending football matches on Saturday afternoons. They were mounting a string of motor cars, which darted off as soon as their complement of passengers was aboard.

"Have these men been having a half-holiday?" I asked the driver.

"No," he replied, "these are the Allanforth miners and ironworkers getting home for the day."

"Surely not," I said, "I never saw miners and ironworkers clean and dressed like these except on Sundays and holidays."

"That," said the driver, "is still the case in other parts of the country, but the Allanforth miners leave their working clothes in the store at the pit-head, wash and change into fresh clothes and boots immediately they reach the surface, and travel by motor to their homes, many of them miles away."

We followed the procession of cars, which decreased in number the further we went. I observed that at intervals of about half-a-mile we swept round a loop, at the other side of which a car was setting down its living freight. The road was undulating, where it dipped there were footbridges across, and where it rose there were paths beneath, connecting the country on each side. Thick hedges enclosed the road throughout its whole length, and over their top I could just make out in the gloaming, cottages surrounded by gardens as far as eye could reach. We had not gone far when the electric light was turned on, not only on the road but in most of the houses, while a small lamp twinkled in the garden in front of each door, lighting up the path from the gate to the house. The whole effect, sprung upon one for the first time, was striking in the extreme.

After traversing apparently over ten miles, the driver drew up his car, took a long stick and pushed an electric button on a post, a gate swung

open and the car glided through, the gate automatically closing behind us.

A run uphill of less than a mile brought us to Graham's house. I had just stepped into the garden when the door of the house opened, and Graham came down the path in company with another gentleman.

"George," said Graham to my driver, "after getting Mr. Watson's luggage into the house, you might kindly take this gentleman back to the station at Stirling. Delighted to welcome you home, old chap; just step up to the house and I'll be with you in a minute."

I had just exchanged warmest greetings with Nellie, whom I must now call Mrs. Graham, when we were joined by her husband. "Pardon me, Watson," said he, "for not coming to meet you. I intended doing so, but was deeply engaged with the gentleman who has just gone, and his visit was quite unexpected. By the way, do you know him?"

"There was something about him that seemed familiar to me," I replied, "but I really cannot say that I know him."

"Well, he is the Right Honourable Winsloe Kirkwell."

"Ah, rather a prominent member of the last Liberal Government, wasn't he? I never quite knew what to make of him," I went on; "I was never very favourably impressed by him, yet he appeared to wield considerable influence in his

party and even in the country in those days. How do you account for that, Graham?"

"Consummate cheek," was his prompt answer, "allied to the successful study of the jumping cat. But the country is sick of him and his kind, and since the Liberal Government was shattered five years ago on the Irish Home Rule proposals, several of its members have been coquetting with the Socialists.

"I would have liked to believe that Mr. Kirkwell's mission here was disinterested, but he spread on the flattery too thick, and when he suggested that our cause was so good that he felt inclined to take the platform on its behalf, his motive was too obvious.

"He undoubtedly possesses rhetorical and oratical gifts, but you know, Watson, that our cause does not depend upon any man or men, however clever; we rely solely upon the righteousness of our principle. The socialistic ideal is fundamentally different from any of the ideals of Liberalism or Conservatism, therefore no good can come of an alliance with either of these parties.

"New Allanforth has played its part by demonstrating the practicability of Socialism; it remains for its advocates to bring the lesson home to the whole country, and the opportunity must come soon, as a general election cannot be long delayed.

"The Unionist Government has done little but mark time during its tenure of office; but even so it has not done much harm, for the

country has been ripening naturally for Socialism, while the Government accommodates its administration to the trend of the times. As a matter of fact, the Prime Minister himself has taken the trouble to acquaint himself with our work here, and I have a private letter from him in which he makes handsome acknowledgment of the success which has crowned our efforts, and says that he fears that the forthcoming election will show party politics to be played out. He also says that he has a premonition that the country is likely to give the Socialists a chance this time, and that he would not be greatly perturbed about it if he could feel assured that a Socialist Government would not touch Home Rule, and would not interfere with the recently reformed Second Chamber. I pointed out to him that our success at Allanforth showed that Socialists had a great work to do within the limits of the Constitution, and that if returned to office they were not likely to dissipate their energies on constitution tinkering."

At this point Mrs. Graham summoned us to tea, and at table I took the opportunity of inquiring for my old friends. I was delighted to learn they were all alive and well, and that the life at Allanforth had made new creatures of them, both Graham and his wife assuring me that I would not recognise poor old Simpson now—he had got quite stout, and was as cheery and lively as a cricket.

"I am awfully glad, Graham," said I, "that

these poor folks have found homes amongst you, but don't you find them a burden upon the community?"

Graham looked at his wife and smiled, and she smiled back to him. "It does interest us," said he explainingly, "to know how outsiders view our proceedings. But our old friends from Edinburgh are not really a burden at all. You know the scientific definition of dirt as matter in the wrong place; well, we prevent 'dirt' by so organising the work of the State that every man and woman finds his and her right place. Of course, there are a few people who are unable to earn a living, but they are extremely few indeed who cannot pay their way under our system, which is so good and works so well that there is but little occasion for the exercise of charity. You will remember that in the old days our contention was that if justice prevailed, charity was unnecessary; we have proved this conclusively."

I was not surprised, for it was just what might be expected. "Speaking of the system at New Allanforth," I said, "do you still carry on without money?"

"Practically that is so," Graham replied; "the trustees on behalf of the State handle the money, and it is only when members of the community or their sons or daughters leave that money is paid over to them.

"Our system is the same as when you left four years ago, but, of course, on an enormously greater scale. There are roughly twenty thousand

houses in the State, and the plan we have adopted is that of calling each district by a letter, and giving each house a number; thus, our home is known as B793.

"Every house is connected by telephone with one great central supply depôt, where also is the telephone exchange, post, and telegraph office. At the depôt an account is kept of all goods supplied to members, who are entitled to demand goods inclusive of estimated rental of house and State charges for the public service up to the amount of the average income as declared annually by the trustees.

"As a matter of fact the demand for goods only amounts on an average to little over half the income, the cost of living being so low, and already the capital of our little State is counted by millions. That is how we are able to give the Socialist Parliamentary Party a quarter of a million sterling to enable them to make a supreme effort to capture an actual majority of seats in the House of Commons. They can afford to spend all the money on the contest because every member elected will have his salary of four hundred pounds a year. We are also safe to put Mr. Joe Dunn in as a member for this county division, and I'll guarantee there won't be a better man in the House."

Evidently the finances of New Allanforth were in a flourishing condition, but it seemed equally evident that the members of the community were kept rigidly in a state of equality, and I asked Graham if that was not so.

"I must confess," said he, "to an instinctive sympathy with the objection that equality does not make for bringing out the best that is in mankind; but in the light of practical experience we see no harm resulting from it. Equality is not our aim; it is simply incidental to our system, and, after all, there is virtue in equality when allied to liberty and fraternity. We are, as Paul says, members of one another; and the advantage of equality becomes apparent when you reflect that if one of our number is attacked from the outside he has millions sterling at his back, he has a right to call up all the resources of the community in his defence. We argue that all service rendered to the community shall be adequately remunerated by the community. The work of the dentist and the schoolmaster is necessary work, entitling the dentist and the schoolmaster to an honourable living, and they get it; the work of the builder and the labourer is just as necessary, and entitles them to an honourable living, and they get it. The value of work depends not upon the class of it, but upon the necessity for having it done; and the moment you introduce scales of remuneration for different classes of work you create conditions which inevitably make for discord, strife, and social division, instead of concord, peace, and social prosperity."

I could not deny that the argument was based upon the guiding principle of the Allanforth community, so I changed the subject. "Well,"

I said, "I think you will acknowledge that your system presents this weakness, that with the State providing everything so generously, the people will lose all notion of thrift." He looked thoughtful for a moment, smiled, then laughed outright to my inexpressible surprise, for I felt that I had scored a point.

"And so, Watson," he said, "you would have us model the State on a pattern that made the exercise of thrift necessary? Don't you see that that is exactly the condition from which we have escaped?

"Nellie, will you please look up 'thrift' in the Bible Dictionary and see what Jesus and Paul say about it. 'Blessed are the thrifty' preaches the clergyman with two hundred pounds a year upwards, to the workman with thirty-five shillings a week downwards. The capitalist employer living in luxury descants upon the advantages of thrift to his worker living in penury. The thrifty artisan robs himself and his family of rational, necessary, and well-deserved enjoyment in order to put something aside for a rainy day; a thrifty nation murders children by the thousand by allowing its population to breed for generations in city tenements varying from the barrack-like to the slum-like; and in the glorious name of thrift it preaches the equally glorious gospel of cheapness! No, Watson, this good old Scottish thrift is thievish and murderous."

He was interrupted by Mrs. Graham, who was busy turning over the pages of a book, exclaiming,

"Why, Allan, the word 'Thrift' does not appear here at all."

"I hardly thought it would," said he. "We are not likely to read of thrift in a book that advises us to cast our bread upon the waters. By the way, Watson, how would you like a thrifty God? I'm afraid He wouldn't have bothered much about a good many of us; He'd have found the lavishing of His treasures upon lots of us a bad speculation; yet there is a terrific prodigality in His Providence, only the abundant stores He has provided have been cornered by men using money as their weapon.

"We have dethroned Mammon in our community, and are in process of enthroning the love of God and our neighbour as the vital precept.

"Coming among us as you are doing, you are apt to find old notions rather out of date; for example, you retain the idea of thrift which is a cherished belief of every Scotsman, but which, nevertheless, is based upon a misconception of its meaning.

"To us, thrift means the science of thriving; and as we thrive very well you may lay the flattering unction to your soul that you have joined a thrifty community."

Graham's discourse was cut short by the crying of an infant overhead.

"Hullo, what's that?" I inquired, "you didn't tell me——"

"He's telling you himself as hard as he can. Nellie called him after two of our friends; he is

known as Frederick Saunders Graham, but commonly called Baby Boy. Now, you have had a long journey and must be tired, so let us have one last pipe in the garden and then to bed."

When I awoke next morning from a refreshing sleep the sunshine was streaming full into my room, while through the open window was wafted the fragrance of the carnations and sweet peas in the garden below, whence came sounds as of someone working with a spade. Looking out I saw Graham digging potatoes at the bottom of the garden, which was laid out at that part with vegetables.

"Good-morning," he shouted in reply to my salutation, "come down to breakfast when you have dressed, and I'll be ready by the time you are."

It was a perfect autumn morning, and as I sat at breakfast, the table gracefully decked with fresh-cut flowers, appetite sharpened by the bracing atmosphere admitted through the wide open glass door, I reflected how beautiful it was just to be alive under such conditions.

I could not refrain from expressing my delight to my host and hostess, and inquiring if the Allanforth population all lived under similar conditions.

"Yes," replied Graham, "we are all on this beastly dead level"; at which we all laughed heartily. "And the worst of it is," he continued, "there is simply no escape, we can't make a better of it here; but if any man wants to 'better

himself', as our delightful individualistic friends would put it, all he has to do is to go back to the old world, get on and build himself a mansion a street or two away from the hovels, just to average up things. Now, anyone with a scrap of intelligence can see that under such a beautiful system there exists the fullest scope for the development of all the graces, generosity for example, a privilege which we unfortunate Socialists are denied.

Then our good friend who builds himself the mansion would contribute funds to a church or mission so that the denizens of the hovels might be told of their prospects of mansions in the skies."

At this we did not laugh so heartily, indeed we seemed rather to have found food for somewhat bitter reflection. A few minutes later Graham and I found our way to a shady seat in the garden, and while enjoying the best smoke of the day, the after-breakfast pipe, I took the opportunity of acquainting myself with the position of affairs at New Allanforth.

Recognising that home production for home consumption is one of the primary tenets of Socialism, I asked Graham to what extent this had been accomplished.

"I incline to the belief," he replied, "that we have now accomplished in that direction all that is possible in this country, and that is a very great deal. At least eighty per cent. of both the necessaries and luxuries of life are produced

within our own borders, and as you are aware, in the case of manufactures, we have a large surplus, which can be increased at any time.

"These boots on my feet were born and bred on Allanforth. We rear a special herd of cattle, producing all the milk, butter, and meat required by our people, while the hides go to our own tanners and curriers, and from them to the boot factory. This suit of clothes was grazing on the hillside yonder a couple of years ago, and our breakfast this morning was all home-grown except the tea and sugar. Our bacon is all home-fed and home-cured, we never need to buy eggs, the supply from the poultry yards connected with groups of houses is ample, we produce all the honey we can consume, all the fruits suitable to our soil and climate; and every householder is also a landholder to the extent of a quarter of an acre. We employ agricultural experts to instruct our whole population in the most scientific methods of cultivating the land, and each year shows a marked improvement in the results. The very best selected seed is supplied from our central depôt, and we save our people a good deal of the drudgery of gardening by turning over the soil with our small motor ploughs. We are great on tomato culture, too, and if you step up to the greenhouse at the corner of our ground I will show you our method of working. You see this glass house stands at the corner of four gardens, with an entrance from each: we all have our own part of the

interior, and the great economy of it is that one greenhouse and one heating apparatus serves four householders. Some of our people actually cultivate brambles, and as you go about this month you will see a crop that will astonish you."

"One moment, Graham," I broke in, "your speaking of the land and agriculture reminds me that you claim to produce over eighty per cent. of necessaries and luxuries. Now, the population of New Allanforth is already greater than it was seven years ago, and in those days probably not more than forty per cent. of the necessaries and luxuries were of home production. You surely claim a great deal too much in view of the accepted fact that the British Islands cannot produce half the food supplies of the existing population."

"Which is far from being fact," rejoined Graham. "The cultivable area of these islands is over thirty million acres, and as it is an accepted fact that an acre of land highly cultivated produces the food of two and a half human beings annually, it is clear that this country is capable of producing the food supply for about twice the existing population. It is also a fact that millions of acres have been deliberately allowed by the landlords to go out of cultivation, and that notwithstanding the reclamation of hundreds of thousands of acres from waste lands there are millions fewer acres under cultivation to-day than forty years ago. Still another fact is that under the haphazard system of British

farming the land yields little more than half of what can be taken out of it, for it has been demonstrated that one man can make from twice to three times as profitable use of the land as another man.

Recognising this, we regard the whole subject of land as of supreme importance, and at an early period in our operations a Land Council, consisting of Sandy McPherson, expert agriculturist, Mr. Williamson, the surveyor, Mr. Hunter, chemical analyst, and Mr. McFarlane, superintendent of the Cleansing Department. You smile at the inclusion of the head scavenger, but he is invaluable on the Council.

"All the refuse is collected from every house and workshop in the State, taken by motor-wagon to a disused quarry, and there carefully sorted out, Hunter and McFarlane instructing the workers. Some of the refuse makes manure without treatment, some has to be chemically treated, or has to be burned, but even the ash and the soot from chimneys is utilised in the improvement of certain soils. About a year ago pulverisers were erected for the preparation not only of manures but actually of soil itself, and it was only in the spring of this year that a new contrivance for sowing seed was used for the first time. McPherson believes in selection of seed and in planting singly. Of course, it was out of the question to sow an area of some square miles by hand, so he consulted with his colleagues on the Land Council, and they decided to ask the

engineers to produce a machine for the purpose. The engineers entered into the idea enthusiastically, and among them they produced in less than three months a seed sower which will yet be used the world over. It is a lightly-built motor seated for one man only, and it sows five drills simultaneously. These drills are ten inches apart, and as the machine drops one seed in each drill at every ten inches the plants have room to breathe. All the driver has to do is to keep a perfectly uniform rate of speed, and the machine does the rest. The result of the selection of seed and sowing singly in soil perfectly adapted to each kind of cereal is that the crop is more than double the British average. The selecting of seed and preparing of soil is certainly extra work, but that is more than balanced by the economising of seed and in the working of large areas at much smaller proportionate expense than is incurred by small farmers, who have to buy seed, machinery which they get little use of, keep up fences, and so forth."

I listened with intense interest to this description of scientific farming, but did not understand what advantage there could be in sowing singly.

"The advantage is this," replied Graham in response in my inquiry, "that each seed gets full room for what is called tillering, sending up all the stems it is capable of producing, and thus becoming a perfect plant. Seed taken from such plants becomes increasingly prolific, and we have known wheat and barley seed sending up seventy

to a hundred stems, bearing over three thousand grains."

"That is splendid, but I do not suppose you can effect any economy in the rearing and feeding of cattle."

"Oh, yes," said he, "we have already accomplished a good deal. The British farmer is pleased to raise one and a half to two tons of dry hay per acre, and it takes from two to three acres on that scale of production to feed one milch cow.

"By our system of sewage irrigation, selection of seed and doctoring of soil, we averaged this year four and a half tons per acre, and expect to do better still. Thus by feeding the sheep chiefly on hill pasture and growing the major portion of the food for cattle on sewage meadows, we are able to rear all the meat we require without interfering materially with corn and wheat lands."

"It would appear then," I commented, "that this little island really can produce all the food its population requires, and that a few years ago our Government would have been more profitably employed encouraging the scientific development of agriculture, than in building warships to prevent the Germans cutting off our food supplies."

"That is absolutely the case," said Graham. "Even from a capitalist point of view, the policy of the Capitalist Government was absurd; its strongest line of defence was and is to render this island self-contained and self-supporting."

Satisfied that in such an important field as that of agriculture the Allanforth community was thoroughly alive to its best interests, I turned my attention to the social and industrial conditions.

"From what I saw coming up last night," said I, "our people do not believe in city life."

"No," agreed Graham, "unless you call what I am about to show you a city."

Together we stepped out of the garden and sauntered up the road for about a couple of hundred yards. Rounding a bend in the road there came into view the most wonderful sight I had ever beheld. Spread out before us over a radius of about five miles square lay a magnificent panorama, greenhouses glistening in the sunlight, dwelling houses set in the midst of beautiful gardens, while beyond was a great stretch of corn, wheat, and barley, yellow to the harvest, a light wind playing over it, setting it in gentle rhythmic motion like the waves of a golden sea. To the east, south, and west towered the eternal hills like silent sentinels guarding the peaceful community below .

"What do you think of our city?" inquired Graham, after a prolonged silence during which I looked around in amazement, drinking in every detail.

"I have read somewhere of the city of our God," I replied; "perhaps I should not say such a thing, but this does look as if it might be a city He established. Tell me, Graham, is this

really the great scheme you and your colleagues planned from the beginning?''

'' The scheme was in our heads all right, Watson, but it was a vague nebulosity until Mr. Williamson, our architect and surveyor, gave it direction and substance; what you see around you of the art of man reflects the mind of Williamson, like as these hills reflect the mind of the Creator. Now let me point out the features of New Allanforth.

'' You will observe that on the one hand we avoid the criminal folly of herding men, women, and children together, as is done with such injurious results in manufacturing towns, while on the other hand we recognise that man is a social being, and so we have four households to the acre. There is, therefore, neither congestion, nor is there lack of opportunity for social intercourse.

'' I need not tell you what these open spaces are; you know recreation parks and a football ground when you see them. There are cricket pitches, tennis courts, and croquet lawns in all the parks, as also a band stand. We have one good brass band, one good orchestra, and numerous choirs.

'' Do you see that pile of substantial buildings away there to the south? There we have our grand concert hall, seats nearly three thousand, with smaller halls adjoining, which are utilised, however, as class rooms for the school of arts, where music, drawing, painting, languages, and sciences are taught to old and young.

"Further along to the right you see the library, the gymnasium, and the swimming bath, while at the end is the recreation hall with billiard tables, etc. In the tower over the grand hall is a belfry, and an enthusiastic Socialist bell-ringer gives the community a delightful half-hour every morning and again at sunset. That vast building somewhat to the east and quite close to Main Road is, as you have already surmised, the commercial depôt, over which our friend Ewen is commanding officer. He has over two hundred of a staff under him—clerks, counter assistants, packers, stock-keepers; they handle practically everything that a civilised community needs, and such is the organisation and discipline maintained by Ewen that the whole concern is like a perfect machine.

There are at present four schools, all within easy reach of Main Road. You passed close to one of them last night between Main Road and my house; that is a second you see a little over a mile from where we stand, the third is just beyond and concealed by the depôt, while the fourth stands nearly five miles south from here.

"The schools are built near Main Road in order that the teachers of certain subjects may visit each school for one hour every day, getting quickly from school to school by motor. It is required of every teacher that he and she make a constant study of agriculture and horticulture, so that when the weather is good they shall spend one hour in the open air each day giving instruc-

tion in these subjects to every boy and girl over ten years of age. As most of our children are prospective householders, with a quarter of an acre of land to work upon, we regard the study of intensive culture as of great importance, and we may confidently predict that twenty years hence we shall astonish the world with practical evidence of the unlimited productivity of the earth. Experiment has shown that by selection of seed adapted to specially prepared and even manufactured soil, combined with scientific culture, the earth can be made to yield three times the average produce of the past. With possibilities such as these, surely the study of the land should be of supreme concern to mankind. But let us finish our geographical survey. Away to the west there you can just see the top of Mountfort peeping through the trees.

Doctor Saltman is doing a fine work there, and only recently Julia Macdonald was installed as matron; Sister Julia she is called. The doctor is a trump. He came for a rest, and has worked like a nigger ever since. What an influence that man exerts! He has always about a dozen young doctors assisting him in the medical and sanitary service of the State, some of them Socialists, some not, but all earnest fellows and deeply interested in Saltman's work.

"I don't need to tell you where to look for old Allanforth Castle, now New Allanforth Hotel."

"Hotel!" I repeated, "it never occurred to

me that a hotel had a place in your economy. How is it worked?"

"No difficulty about it," said Graham. "We sell our goods to outsiders, we allow them to use our motor cars, and we board them at the hotel, all on similar terms to those obtaining elsewhere, only the money in every case goes into the coffers of the State.

"The hotel, however, is not a money-making concern. It is used as much for entertaining guests of the State as for paying visitors, and there are resident boarders who find it more convenient to stay there than in private houses. Our old friend Blake makes his headquarters there, while Mr. and Mrs. Saunders are in charge. Blake is a good old chap; duty is a religion with him. No matter what the weather may be, every day finds him at his work, and no boarder at the hotel puts more zeal into the work of the garden than he. As acting host he is a valuable asset to the hotel; he makes every guest at home in his own way, but—they must go his way.

"He may be playing billiards with them, have a drink and smoke a cigar with them, but on the stroke of ten o'clock down go the lights, he marches them off to the parlour, the household is summoned, and he leads the evening worship. His way of going about it is simply irresistible, and I have never heard yet of any man having the temerity to disregard the summons.

"Now, I think you've seen about everything, so we'll get down and see if Nellie has any dinner for us."

"Seen everything?" I repeated in astonishment; "why, I have been looking for the factories and have not seen one. I know where they ought to be, but somehow I can't make out the lie of the land."

"Ah, that's Williamson again. After planning all the factories and workshops along the river bank, he deliberately cut them off from view for the sake of the amenity of Allanforth. See that long plantation away to the south-east just across Main Road; it curtains off the works from the residential district, while the workers have only a few minutes' walk through the plantation to the cars on Main Road. Speaking of the works and workers, Watson, what do the folks abroad say of our goods; giving satisfaction, eh?"

"Rather," I replied, "but I could have disposed of far more."

"Don't you bother about that," said he, "you disposed of all we wanted to dispose of. Our deliberate purpose is to export the exact monetary equivalent in our manufactured goods of the raw material we import. We manufacture primarily for our own consumption, and are selfish enough (or patriotic enough if you like) to prefer giving the British public our surplus product rather than the foreigner. Of course, you understand that when we have supplied our own needs, paid all costs of public work, and exported the equivalent of our imports, the surplus is profit to the State, greater or lesser according to the price we seek and get, and we

do not worry about the price; the market price in the British markets is always good enough for us."

"Here, Graham," I remarked, "is a question which suggests itself to me. In the event of any contingency arising which calls for the raising of extraordinary revenue (say a war, necessitating tremendously heavy taxation), where is that revenue to come from?"

"That is a very simple matter," he immediately replied. "The hours of labour are eight per day, four on Saturday—half-past eight to half-past twelve. One extra hour's work per day means three-quarters of a million sterling in a year, equal to three hundred millions from the whole population of the British Islands; a very improbable requirement. Besides, we hold a substantial capital already.

"Any more questions, old curiosity shop?" he laughingly inquired.

"Oh, yes," said I, in the same strain; "for example, what do you work at yourself when you're not running the British Empire?"

"Now, don't get nasty; you know quite well I only run the British Empire in my spare moments. But seriously, I almost think I do earn my living; at least the State generously considers that I pay my way by spending half my working hours at the duties of trusteeship, and the other half in the supervision of the Correctional and Probationary Home which lies

about a mile north from here just at the back of this hill."

"Don't you find that rather a thankless and hopeless task?" I asked.

"Well, no," he replied, though with less decision than usual.

"The very few refractory members of the community who make their abode there have the choice of detention at the Home for a time, or expulsion from the State for all time. Seldom does any one of them accept the latter alternative, and as all of them get tired of detention sooner or later, the incentive to resume their position as decent and worthy members of the community is very strong, and the task of bringing about this desirable result is thoroughly congenial to me."

"Here is one more question that has occurred to me: Where is your State House, or House of Parliament, or whatever you call the place where the laws are made?"

"My dear sir," replied Graham, "don't worry yourself about laws; the law of Allanforth, 'love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbour as thyself,' is written in the hearts of the people. Man-made laws cannot make bad men good; can indeed only restrict their power of doing evil; but where the law of love prevails, goodness and mercy follow as a matter of course.

"We have, however, one drastic law which I don't think you will find in operation anywhere else. We are resolutely opposed to the reproduction of the unfit, which we regard as a crime

against posterity and the community. To this end all candidates for matrimony must submit to medical examination, and if the report be really bad, three courses are open to them: they may give up the idea of marriage, they may marry after steps have been taken to render reproduction impossible, and if they accept neither of these alternatives they must leave the State.

"From what I have already said, you can readily infer that we have no party politics in our State; the trustees simply attend to the business of the community, and as all the business of the State is recorded in the office at the depôt, our natural meeting place is Ewen's private room.

"Beneath his room a great strong-room has been built of stone and steel, and there are kept all the business papers, books, and State documents of Allanforth. The trustees meet five days a week for fifty weeks in the year (Christmas week and a week in midsummer being State holidays); seven of the ten form a quorum, and with all the factories and mills and every dwelling-house connected by telephone, we are almost as good as on the spot when considering any matter connected with the State. It must have occurred to you, Watson, that the trustee arrangement made when the New Allanforth enterprise was launched could only be provisional. In view of that we have for some time been devising a scheme for establishing a permanent constitution, and just a month ago the unanimous recommen-

dations of the trustees were almost unanimously agreed to by the whole community after being submitted to the referendum.

These recommendations were: That the community proceed to elect twenty-four trustees; that the process of election be by every man and woman from twenty-one to thirty years of age having twenty-four votes, every man and woman from thirty-one to forty years of age having forty-eight votes, every man and woman of forty-one years of age and over having seventy-two votes; that the first duty of the trustees be to appoint from among the people seven elders, men of capacity and integrity, to whom shall be referred all disputes, and whose decision shall be final; that these elders be appointed for a period of seven years, but do not assume office until the expiry of one year after appointment; that ten trustees retire every year, the individuals being ascertained by drawing lots among the whole body of trustees, and that they be re-elected or others elected in their place, the process of election being by every man and woman from twenty-one to thirty years of age having ten votes; every man and woman from thirty-one to forty years of age having twenty votes, every man and woman of forty-one years of age and over having thirty votes. The first election will take place on Friday of next week, and when the new trustees meet, after the appointment of elders, their next duty will be the appointment from among themselves of committees, such as the Domestic, Educational,

Commercial, and Recreation Committees, for the increasing work of the State necessitates the exclusive attention of specially qualified men and women."

We spent the afternoon in the garden discussing, among other things, the constitution as outlined in the original trustees' recommendations, and at the end of the day I was so convinced that the pioneer work was completed that I mentioned to Graham that I could not imagine they had any other schemes on hand.

"Oh, but we have," said he, "and always will have. For one thing, we are going to employ all the unskilled labour for the next few months in laying hot-water pipes on about three acres of land, and in manufacturing and laying down a special soil for the forcing of vegetables, with a view to getting four or five crops in the year.

"Then we have another job in prospect at the mouth of the river. Mr. Allinson, the Socialist shipowner, has been a member of our community for a considerable time now, and with his advice and assistance we have purchased a large ship to carry our goods abroad and to bring the raw material for our factories. She will sail from Grangemouth, and goods will be conveyed to and from that port by flat-bottomed motor boats. A landing-stage at the mouth of the river is in process of erection, and will be completed by the end of the year. Motor-waggons will run right down to the landing stage from our factories, and

connection with the sea is established. It is intended to use the motor boats for the conveyance of fish from Newhaven, and there is a possibility that we may extend our operations to catching the fish as well.

"Now, I think you have a good idea of the position of affairs here, and during your furlough you will have ample opportunity of seeing everything for yourself.

"To-morrow is Saturday, and you will not do much sight-seeing before business is stopped for the day, but should the weather continue good, you will see the last cricket match of the season."

Immediately after breakfast next morning I set out to have a look round the factories and the mills.

A natural instinct led me straight to the boot factory, and there I found so much to interest me that I got no further that day.

Nor was I less interested in the cricket match that afternoon, but I must resist the temptation to report it in detail. Suffice it to say that the match was North *v.* South, and that dusk was gathering ere the last North wicket fell. The crowd of about two thousand had dispersed when I was joined by Graham, who played for the North, and together we walked sharply home. I expressed my disappointment that the match had not been finished, but Graham said that was all right, the South would have their innings *next day!*

"Do you forget that to-morrow is Sunday?" I asked.

"No," said he, "but we deliberately refuse to accept the idea of Sunday held under the system we have left behind. Sunday was made for man, not man for the Sunday, and anything that is not sinful six days of the week cannot be sinful on the seventh. The trustees gave this matter serious consideration, and agreed to the Sunday forenoon being devoted exclusively to the service of God in worship, and that neither labour nor recreation be permitted to jar upon religious fervour or sentiment during that time, while indulgence in any form of recreation that did not involve labour was permissible during the remainder of the day. This liberty for all and consideration for all makes life and living most truly sacred the whole seven days of the week."

Even as he spoke the air was filled with music; slowly and sweetly the bellringer struck out the hymn—

> At even ere the sun was set,
> The sick, oh Lord, around Thee lay;

and I recovered from the shock of surprise at the overthrow of the Sunday observance I had been reared in.

There was a touch of frost in the air that night, so we had our last pipe at the fireside instead of in the garden.

"I wonder, Watson," said Graham, half musingly, "what is the predominant impression

in your mind of what you have seen since your return to Allanforth."

"I have no hesitation in telling you," said I. "I have been deeply interested in *all* I have seen, but nothing has impressed me so much as the people themselves."

"Spoken like a true Socialist," said Graham; "'the proper study of mankind is man'; go on."

"The miners and ironworkers I saw on Thursday afternoon," I continued, "the workers at the boot factory, and the crowd at the match to-day all wore an expression of contentment and of the very joy of living in marked contrast to the worried and anxious look of the city populace I have always been familiar with."

Graham expressed his satisfaction, and we lapsed into silence, until a fugitive recollection issuing forth from the hidden recesses of memory impelled me to ask him what had happened to Jamieson, the merchant and enemy of Socialism.

"Ah, poor chap," Graham replied, "I fear his case is hopeless. In his obstinacy he fought us to a finish, but it was the finish of his own resources. He is bankrupt and a drunkard, despised by those who used to fawn upon him, forsaken by the minister and office-bearers of the church which was always pleased to accept his money, yet his vain pride makes him spurn the help we have offered him, and in impotent rage he threatens us with all sorts of mischief. Truly the way of transgressors is hard."

CHAPTER XV.

Sunday at New Allanforth.

Sunday morning was just such another as those immediately preceding it; the brilliant sunlight flooded the garden, and as we sat at breakfast the fragrance of flowers and the song of birds stole in through the open door, while a gentle breeze blowing from the south wafted to our ears the inspiring music of the bells. Instinctively we all kept silence in the endeavour to catch the refrain, which proved to be,

> Sweetly the holy hymn
> Breaks on the morning air,
> Before the world with smoke is dim,
> We meet to offer prayer.

The bells ceasing, I broke the silence by asking about the Church.

Graham replied: "Even as the law is written in the hearts of the people, so does the Church at Allanforth consist in living temples. We are at church in our own homes."

This sounded enigmatical, but in that same hour it was proved to be literally accurate.

At eleven o'clock the occupants of the other three houses on the acre trooped into Graham's

house; Mrs. Graham set bread and wine on the table, and one of the neighbours, on account of being the oldest, was asked to preside.

He opened the service with prayer, after which Graham went to the piano and we all sang the second Paraphrase, "O God of Bethel." Then there was reading from the Bible, with comments and explanations, a hymn was sung, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed.

With the singing of the twenty-third psalm and the pronouncing of the Benediction, the service was concluded, having lasted over an hour.

After the neighbours had gone, I inquired if that was all the provision made for the religious life and instruction of the community.

"By no means," replied Graham. "Professor Wallace teaches the Bible as literature, expounding it from the original Hebrew and Greek; in the schools the literal word of Scripture is taught to all children, sectarian teaching being prohibited; private citizens are encouraged to form Sunday Schools for children, and may hire any of the halls for meetings, but they must have the cost of using the halls charged against their income, and they may also send contributions to home and foreign missions to the extent of a tenth of their income, these being charged against income in the same way."

Satisfied that greater latitude for the exercise of the most intensely religious instincts could not be desired, I did not pursue the subject farther.

After dinner, Graham donned his flannels and we set out to the cricket match. There were few cars running, Graham explaining that Sunday labour was discouraged to the utmost. On the way down I found evidence everywhere of the spending of Sunday afternoon in rational enjoyment. In most of the gardens people were tending beehives, doing little jobs among plants and bushes, or romping with the children; and we passed several men with fishing rods, and families with tea-baskets making their way to the riverside and the woods. But it was on the cricket ground that the Allanforth community was seen at its best. Surrounding the playing ground were tiers of seats occupied by nearly five thousand people, while immediately behind was a verandah all the way round, with tables and chairs. Later in the afternoon these were utilised to the fullest extent by hundreds who had brought tea-baskets, and the scene was one of delightful animation about four o'clock, when the tables were all occupied, people of all ages and both sexes enjoying their cup of tea and the match at the same time. The game had not been long in progress, and I was watching it with keen interest from a seat in the back row, when I heard voices behind me which I recognised. Turning round hastily, my action attracted the attention of the speakers, who stopped dead.

"Mr. Watson!" exclaimed Sir George Blake, advancing towards me with outstretched hand. "Welcome home, my boy, welcome home."

"Thank you, Sir George, delighted to be amongst you all again."

"No 'Sir Georgeing' me, sir, no 'Sir Georgeing' me; I have been promoted to the—er—most honourable position of—— Well held, sir, well held!" shouted Blake enthusiastically as a North player brought off a brilliant running catch on the boundary. "Yes, it is good enough for me to be a comrade of the Allanforth community. They all call me Blake; even Sister Julia here"—as he recollected her presence. "Why, what a selfish old duffer I am to be sure. In my joy at seeing my old friend Watson I forgot that you were here. Pardon me," and he raised his hat and bowed to Julia, who greeted me with cordiality and an absence of that reserve she had always shown in my presence. In the very moment of our meeting again, the touch of her hand, the sound of her melodious voice, the look of devotion in her dark eyes, all told me that fate (or God) had decreed that we should tread the path of life together.

Blake left us to ourselves; he would "prowl round," as he said, "to see who were all there, but he'd be back for a cup of tea with us if he could get any good Samaritan to invite us." And so the reader can understand that, keenly interested in cricket as I was, I could not possibly write an account of the match. But it was *very* enjoyable. Blake duly turned up when tea was in full swing.

"Hullo, Blake, nobody invited you to tea,"

came in stentorian tones from a table close by. Looking in the direction of the voice, I beheld Joe Dunn and his wife setting out a table, and I stepped up to greet them.

"No," said Blake, "isn't it disgraceful, and me starving, simply starving, sir; come away, Sister Julia, and see if the Dunns know a cure for that."

And so the five of us spent a delightful half-hour, and as it turned out it was well for two of the company that we had that cup of tea, for it was late in the evening ere Julia and I made another meal. We watched the game to its conclusion, which was a draw, the South having no chance of beating the North score, but succeeded in playing out time.

Julia agreeing to my proposal to escort her to Mountfort, nearly four miles away, we set out in the gloaming, but did not hurry, neither did we take the most direct way. The sun had dipped below the horizon, and to the most unsentimental reader it must be obvious what transpired when daylight had gone and the stars alone shone down upon us. I do not quite remember how I put the question, but shall never forget Julia's answer.

"Mr. Watson," she said, slowly, apparently choosing her words with great care, "you do me the highest honour man can offer to woman, and I must not pretend that it is not acceptable to me. But I cannot forget where we first met, and though the recollection is painful to me, I must

remind you of it, and ask if you are giving the circumstance all the weight it undoubtedly has, for it might very well be a bar to marriage."

I assured her that the matter she referred to was buried in oblivion, and that I loved her for all she was, and for all I knew of her.

"Then," she continued, "perhaps I should confess to you that I have loved you since I knew you, and would have loved you to the end of life though you had loved and married another. I have felt all these years that I am not my own, that I belonged to you if to anyone, and that I could never marry another even though you had never cared for me. But as you wish it, and it appears to be the Will of God, I——"

The subsequent proceedings must be left to the imagination of the reader, but though we reached the gate at Mountfort at seven o'clock, it was nearly eight when we parted. I remember nothing of my walk back to Graham's house. I must have gone on wings, for I certainly do not recollect touching the road with my feet, nor did I even see the ground. I saw nothing but stars everywhere, stars twinkling and smiling, twinkling and smiling again.

And when I entered Graham's dwelling it was fortunate that his wife was not in the room, for it took a good half-hour of Graham's phlegmatic stolidity to calm me down. And of course I was bound to take the most stupid way of telling him the news. When he had congratulated me, I

said, "Do you forget the circumstances of my first meeting with Julia?"

"Yes, I forget," he replied, almost savagely. "I forgot as soon as you told me, and have forgotten ever since. And what's more, it's about time *you* had forgotten it."

This outburst did calm me down, and I thanked him for his generous interest in Julia.

Mrs. Graham came down just then, and joined her congratulations and good wishes to those of her husband. At family worship that evening Graham specially implored God's blessing and guidance for Julia and myself. After Mrs. Graham retired for the night, Graham and I sat on enjoying our smoke and a chat for a couple of hours, but as that conversation was strictly personal and private it cannot be set down here.

CHAPTER XVI.

Sealed with Blood.

When I began a few weeks ago to write the story of the founding of the Socialist community at Allanforth, it was my intention to conclude with the chapter preceding this. My task as the first historian of Allanforth had been an unalloyed pleasure, and I was looking forward with no small satisfaction to its completion, when there occurred the melancholy tragedy which filled with profound sorrow not only the members of the Allanforth community, but tens of thousands far beyond its borders, and which, perforce, must now be recorded in this book.

The election of new trustees which took place in November afforded striking testimony to the esteem in which the old members were held, by their being returned at the top of the poll. The fourteen new members were capable and experienced men, imbued with the same spirit and enthusiasm as inspired the original body. Saunders was appointed chairman, a position equivalent to that of president of the miniature commonwealth, and the seven elders were elected by unanimous vote, it having been previously agreed that only men who commanded the unani-

mous support of the trustees could exercise unquestioned authority.

In the following month the general election to the British Parliament was held, the Unionist Government having completed its term of office, and as indicated by the result of recent by-elections, the triumph of Socialism was practically assured, though at Christmas there were still a few returns to come in.

It was Christmas Eve, and my wife and I (for we were married a few weeks after our engagement) were on our way across to a party of friends at the Graham's. Daylight had almost gone when we set out, and for a little time we walked in blissful silence, not a sound breaking the solemn stillness, save the creaking of our footsteps on the thin coating of frosted snow which clad the earth. Suddenly the air around us seemed to speak to our very souls; it trembled with the vibration of enchanting music. From the valley below floated up the chiming of the bells:—

> It came upon the midnight clear,
> That glorious song of old.

Instinctively we set our pace to the music of the bells, while I sang:—

> Yet with the woes of sin and strife,
> The world has suffered long.
> Beneath the angels' strain have rolled
> Two thousand years of wrong:
> And man, at war with man, hears not
> The love song which they bring;
> O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
> And hear the angels sing.
>
>

And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way,
With painful steps and slow,
Look up! for glad and golden hours,
Come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing.

And my wife continued:—

For lo, the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When, with the ever-circling years,
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth,
Its ancient splendour fling,
And the whole world send back the song,
Which now the angels sing.

The bells ceased ringing, but the music so attuned our whole being that we might be said to have reached that state:—

Where each in turn was guide to each,
And fancy light from fancy caught,
And thought leapt out to wed with thought,
Ere thought could wed itself to speech.

What wonder, therefore, that with one accord our minds went back to the Christmas party in Edinburgh seven years before, and simultaneously we reminded each other of the occasion.

It was almost dark when we reached the bend of the road just above Graham's house, and the lights in houses, gardens, and in Main Road were all turned on.

Suddenly a report like a gun-shot rang out on the still air, followed by a cry of anguish, then all was still again.

Realising that something tragic had occurred,

I dashed off down the road in the direction from which the ominous sounds proceeded, and arrived at Graham's gate as Mrs. Graham appeared in the doorway of the house.

As I hurried up the path she asked me, in a tremulous voice betraying both anxiety and fear, if I had seen Allan. Before I could reply, a low moan from the midst of some bushes into which the victim had fallen supplied the answer. Eagerly we tore aside the shrubbery, and there lay the unconscious Graham in a pool of blood.

Our difficulty in lifting him was speedily removed. Dunn and Ewen had been on their way up when they heard the shot, and hurried on, leaving their wives to follow. Arriving at this moment, they helped me to carry the injured man into the house.

Dunn immediately sprang to the telephone and rang up the Exchange, telling the operator to instruct Doctor Saltman to prepare for a shooting accident, and to send a motor to convey the doctor to Graham's house with all speed.

Meantime the ladies had arrived, and, though almost overcome with consternation and horror on being brought into such sudden and close contact with ghastly tragedy, they quickly recovered themselves and rendered valuable assistance. While Mrs. Ewen took the stricken wife aside and sought to comfort her, Mrs. Dunn and Julia washed the blood from Graham's face, stemmed the bleeding from his wounds, and helped to remove his blood-stained garments.

"Now," said the energetic Dunn, "I think you will manage without me here, so I'll rout out the neighbours and hunt for the assassin; we may be able to trace his footprints in the snow."

Within fifteen minutes the Doctor arrived, and at the same time Dunn set out at the head of a party of men with electric torches on the track of the fugitive.

"Ah," said Saltman after a cursory examination," a sporting gun, fired at close range, not more than a dozen paces, pellets in abdomen, chest, and face—hopeless, absolutely hopeless." Turning to Mrs. Ewen and Mrs. Dunn, he asked them to take Mrs. Graham to her room, gave a note to the motor driver to bring some things from Mountfort, and told me to wait in another room, to be at hand if called upon, while he and Julia attended to Graham's injuries.

Sadly I entered the dining-room, where everything spoke of the hearty reception awaiting the guests. The table was laid for a feast and decorated with choice flowers, while evergreens and fairy lamps adorned the room; truly a house of joy turned to a house of mourning. Now the blazing, crackling fire, the lights, the feast, made melancholy mockery of our misery.

Unable to sit calmly, I paced the room while the weary hours wore slowly on, occasionally going to the door to answer anxious inquiries from sympathetic neighbours, who invariably turned away with tears in their eyes when I informed them of the hopelessness of the case.

About 10 o'clock the Doctor came in to ask a cup of tea. A man whose brilliant powers were only equalled by his kindly and sympathetic manner, a kindliness which inspired such confidence in his patients as to contribute in no small measure to their cure, the Doctor was at this moment so manifestly distressed as to render unnecessary the inquiry I was about to make, if there was not the smallest hope. "Watson," he said, "this is a terrible catastrophe. How could any one but a fiend commit such an atrocious deed, and upon a man whose life was spent in doing good."

"Then you cannot save him?"

"No," he replied sadly, "the pellets are deeply imbedded in vital parts. The operation required to remove them would be fatal, and it will not even be a great kindness to bring him back to consciousness, as he will suffer intense agony. His sight, too, is gone. All we can do is to give him sedatives when he becomes conscious, but even with his great strength and robust constitution, he can only live a few days at most."

Having partaken of a slight refreshment during our brief conversation, the Doctor returned to the sick room to relieve Julia from her vigil. When she entered the dining-room we attempted to speak, but could not because of the soreness of heart which we, of all mankind, had good reason to feel; so, when she had sipped the tea, she rejoined the Doctor at the bedside of the sufferer, saying she felt stronger at her duty.

The hour of midnight was striking as Dunn

returned from the pursuit of the miscreant who had thrown the community into mourning.

"Yes," he said, in response to my inquiry, "we got him. It was Jamieson, as I surmised. Fortunately he took to the hills, and we had little difficulty in following his track. We gradually overhauled him, but he must have seen our lanterns and electric torches, and he led the chase for at least five miles before we came up with him. Just as we were about to take him, he slipped on the edge of a bank where he was attempting to jump over a burn, and fell on a jagged rock.

"We improvised a stretcher, and carried him by a near cut to Mountfort, where we left him. Two of Saltman's assistants were in, and they say his spine is fractured."

While Dunn was telling of the capture of Jamieson, I set some food before him, for he had tasted nothing for eleven hours. He attempted to eat, but his exertions being ended he had time to think, time to reflect on the awfulness of the blow that had fallen on this little household and upon Allanforth, and burying his head in his hands over the table, he sobbed like a child.

The Doctor advised me to stay at the house until the end; Graham would want me if he ever returned to consciousness.

Two days elapsed ere that happened, and from then until his suffering ceased it was only at frequent intervals that he knew anyone.

It was during one of these that the Doctor

undertook the delicate task of informing Graham that his last hour was rapidly approaching. Saltman told me that he accepted the inevitable with heroic fortitude, but that he was too far gone to wish to live.

On each of these last days a few of Graham's friends were admitted to the chamber where lay the dying man. Special care was taken to admit those, and they were not a few, who were indebted to Graham for the helping hand which pulled them out of the abyss; and as the slanting rays of the sun from far in the South shone in upon those sightless eyes, upon that marred visage. upon that inanimate being which once was Graham, but now had no form or comeliness, a silent tribute of falling tears, and of tears restrained, was paid to the departing spirit.

On the morning of the seventh day, the last day of the year, he came back to consciousness once more; strangely enough, he seemed to have less pain, and probably in consequence his mental faculties were clearer. Reaching out his hand in search of mine, which he feebly clasped, he whispered to me, "You will carry on the work, old fellow?" "With all my heart," I replied. "You must be gratified to know that *your* work is successfully accomplished."

"Work is never completed on this earth," he said wearily. "In the world's history there is but One who could truly say 'It is finished.' We must always go forward, forward out of darkness, forward into light."

Then after a short pause a new thought seemed to have entered his mind.

"Is the election over?" he asked.

"Yes, Graham," I replied, "343 Socialists to 327 of all the others."

"That is well, good———" and he slipped into unconsciousness again.

Towards evening he rallied for the last time. "Watson, old chap, don't let them hurt Jamieson," he said faintly into my ear. "Poor man, he had a rough time of it.

"I want to tell you something. . . . Jamieson is my cousin. You know that my father inherited the title and estate from his brother, who died without legal issue. Well, Jamieson is my uncle's illegitimate son. Isn't it just fitting that Allanforth should pass to the people—the people from whom it came. But we set up the commonwealth too easily; the covenant had to be sealed with blood. If I could only believe that Jamieson was the better for my going."

"He is, Graham," I replied. "He died this morning, but a nurse from Mountfort brought a note which he dictated saying that in the instant of his ruthless act, he realised all his wickedness, as in a flash, and begging the forgiveness of yourself, of your wife, and of God."

"That is good; it is well at last. I have enjoyed many privileges, but never until now the privilege of forgiving. Nellie dear, forgive him as I do, as God forgives."

There followed a long silence, for the effort of sustained speech had exhausted him; yet again he spoke, but his words were laboured and almost inaudible. "I must sleep, Nellie dear,—good—night. Good—night—Baby—Boy." And he slept, but only the noble spirit of him woke again.

* * * * *

How true it is that "in the midst of life we are in death;" but who that reads these pages shall say that death ends all, that the grave swallows up all the works of a man, defeating the efforts of his life.

No, it cannot be; truth and goodness endure eternally: they are the living words which shall not return unto their Author void. And if Allan Graham is no more to be met in the flesh in his old haunts, go to Allanforth—look into the faces of a contented and kindly people, a people who love their neighbour—and, behold, he liveth for evermore.

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